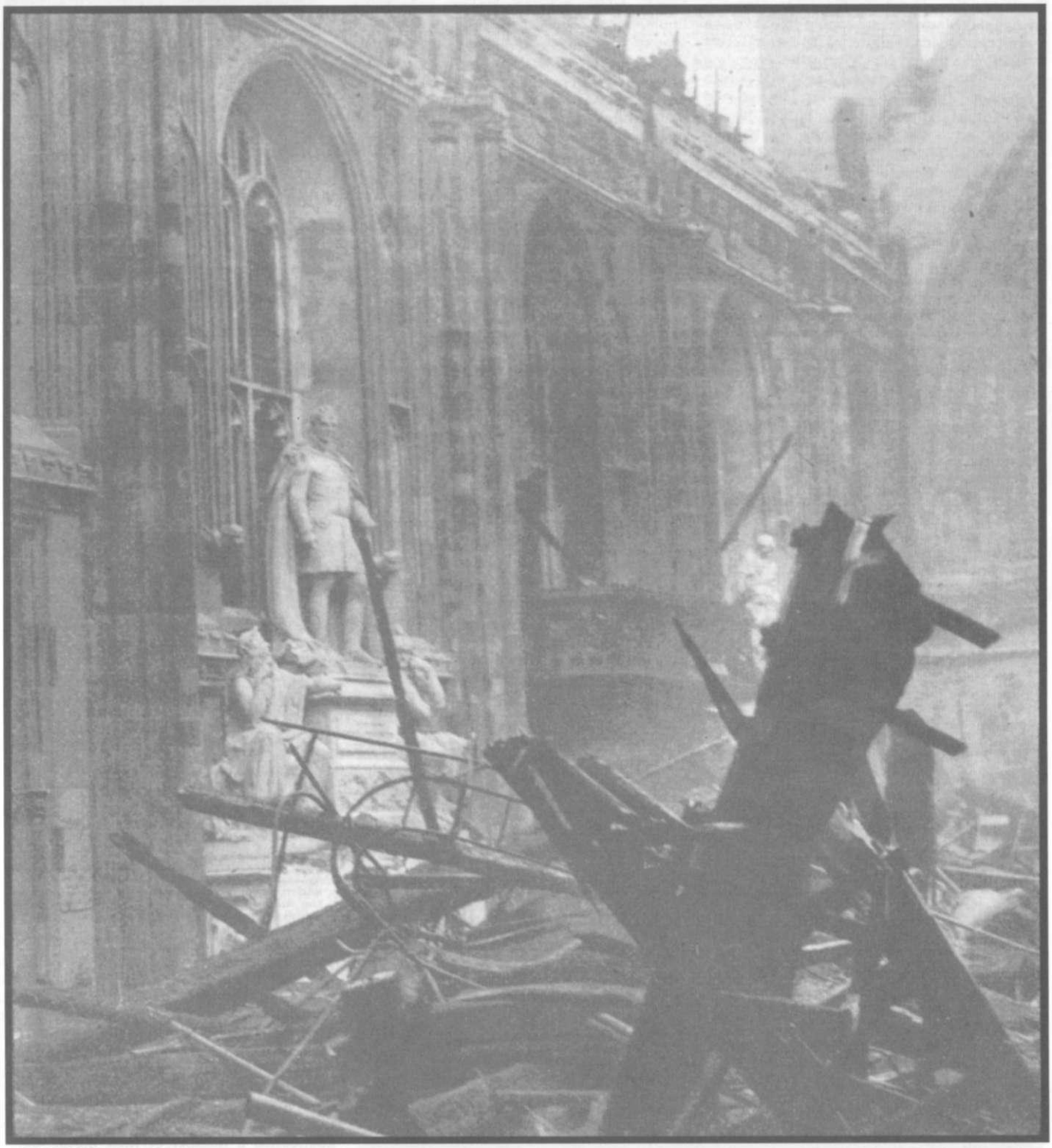
The War Illustrated

Vol. 4 A Permanent Picture Record of the Second Great War No. 71



LONDON'S GUILDHALL, most famous building of its kind in the world, was destroyed during the fierce fire raid made by Nazi airmen on the City in the course of the evening of December 29, 1940. Home of the City Corporation and scene of innumerable historic and civic ceremonies and political gatherings, the Guildhall was partly destroyed by the Great Fire of 1666, but the Nazis were more successful in the work of destruction. Gog and Magog, the famous wooden figures of the legendary giants, perished with other Guildhall treasures, but most of the statues—the photograph above, taken on the morning after the raid, shows clearly that of the Duke of Wellington—were left to survey the ruins of the Great Hall.

Photo, "The Star," Exclusive to THE WAR ILLUSTRATED

In Bardia the Italians Were Surrounded

Swept out of Egypt by the Army of the Nile, Graziani's army of invasion sought a refuge in the fortfied harbour of Bardia. There, as we tell below, they were soon closely beleaguered, and it was held to be merely a question of time before they would be compelled to hoist the white flag of surrender.

LITTLE more than a few huts and warehouses, with a jetty which gives it the right to call itself a port, and an airfield on the top of the desert hills beyond, Bardia was soon crammed to suffocation as the defeated Italians streamed in from the positions they had been forced to abandon in Egypt. Many of them would have liked to have continued their retreat, so severely mauled had they been during the preceding days of battle, but General Berti, who was in command of Bardia, had apparently received orders from Mussolini to dig himself in and to hold out as long as possible. So the fugitives were collected and sorted out, and, stiffened by fresh troops brought up from the west, were sent to their stations in the perimeter of forts. These were distributed roughly in a semi-circle some miles beyond Bardia itself—little outposts built of rock and concrete, defended by artillery and linked by entrenchments.

Meanwhile, Wavell's troops—British and Indians, Australians and New Zealanders and Free French—drew ever closer until every line of retreat had been cut off. Just before the British cut the coast road to the west which linked Bardia to Tobruk and beyond, Berti managed to evacuate most of his air arm and its equipment, and henceforth the Italian advanced air-striking base was at El Adem, 70 miles distant along the coast. Then the ring was closed finally and completely, for the ships of the British Mediterranean Fleet kept close watch off shore.

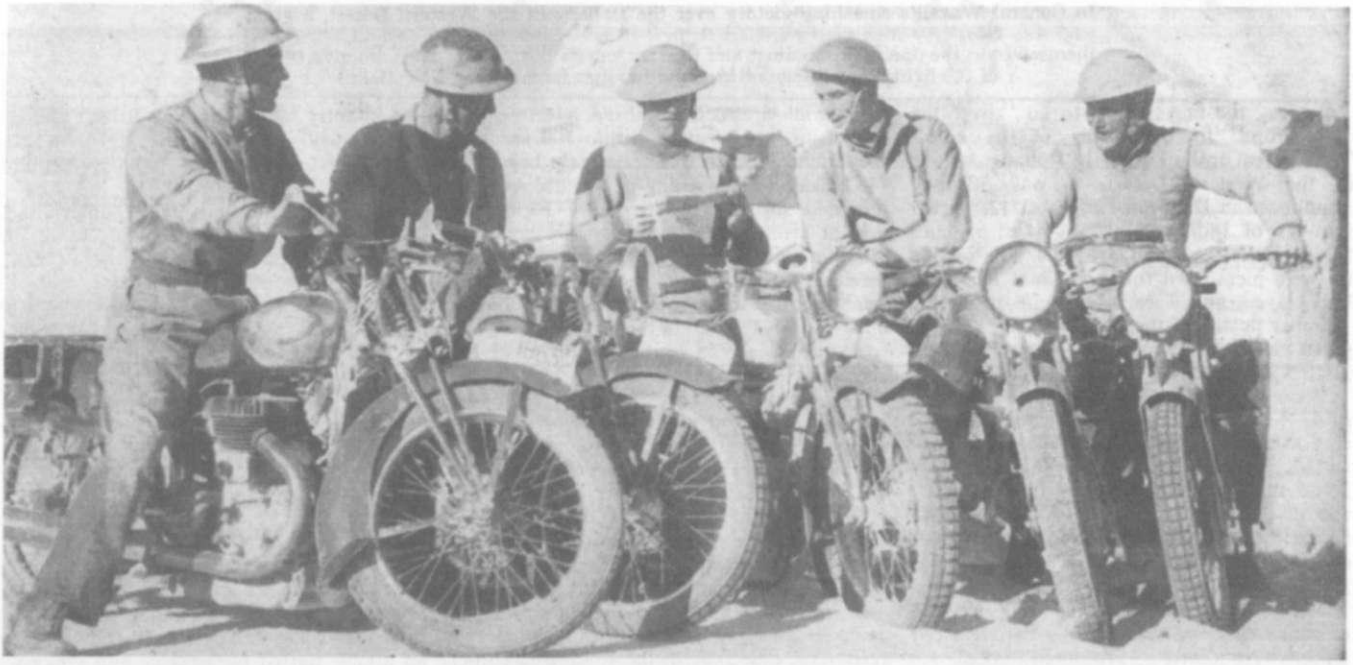
So the siege of Bardia began, and day by day, even hour by hour, the strength of the encircling army grew apace. Way back across the desert for more than 150 miles poured the tide of reinforcements; tanks and armoured cars, lorries packed with men, and supplies, moved in a never-ending stream, their progress marked by vast, billowing clouds of sand. Once again the excellence of British staff work was clearly demonstrated as the great convoys of men and materials moved on with clockwork regularity and precision. The coast road from Alexandria to Sollum was packed with vehicles and columns of marching troops, and the rock walls of "Hellfire" Pass, which had been so stubbornly defended by the Italians only a few hours before, echoed and re-echoed with the roar of the mechanized army.

General Berti's position in the beleaguered port was not enviable, for the 20,000 men whom he was reported to have under his command were now compelled to rely entirely upon the supplies which had been accumulated before the ring was closed. But the British, too, had their difficulties. First, there was the urgent need to overhaul and repair the numbers of tanks, armoured cars and motor lorries which for days and weeks had been driven hard across the rough and stony surface of the desert. Then there was the necessity to replenish the stores of petrol which had been eaten into during the top-speed rush; and there was the same necessity, of course, in the matter of provisions and ammunition for the troops. So swift had been the advance that the communications had been sorely tried, and several days were required to complete the chain afresh. Then, for Maitland Wilson as for Graziani before him, the question of water supplies was one of ever-present urgency; just before the Italians left Sollum they blew up the two big wells on which they had relied during their occupancy of the place, but on the other hand their retreat was so precipitate that they abandoned a number of their motor water-tanks, without stopping to open the cocks. We may surmise that these supply problems, whether of water or of provisions, were solved in large measure by the use of sea transport.

The Australian soldier, top, is protected against sandstorms by an improvised respirator and mica goggles. Above is the commander of the unit that bore the brunt of the attack on Sidi Barrani with his staff amid the ruins.

Some time must probably still elapse before details of the guns, ammunition and stores captured by the Army of the Nile in its first rush to victory are known. It has, however, provided useful work for the Italian prisoners, who are here loading up material into their own lorries—also among the booty—ready to be taken to the British base. *Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright*

Wavell's Men Were Worthy of Their General



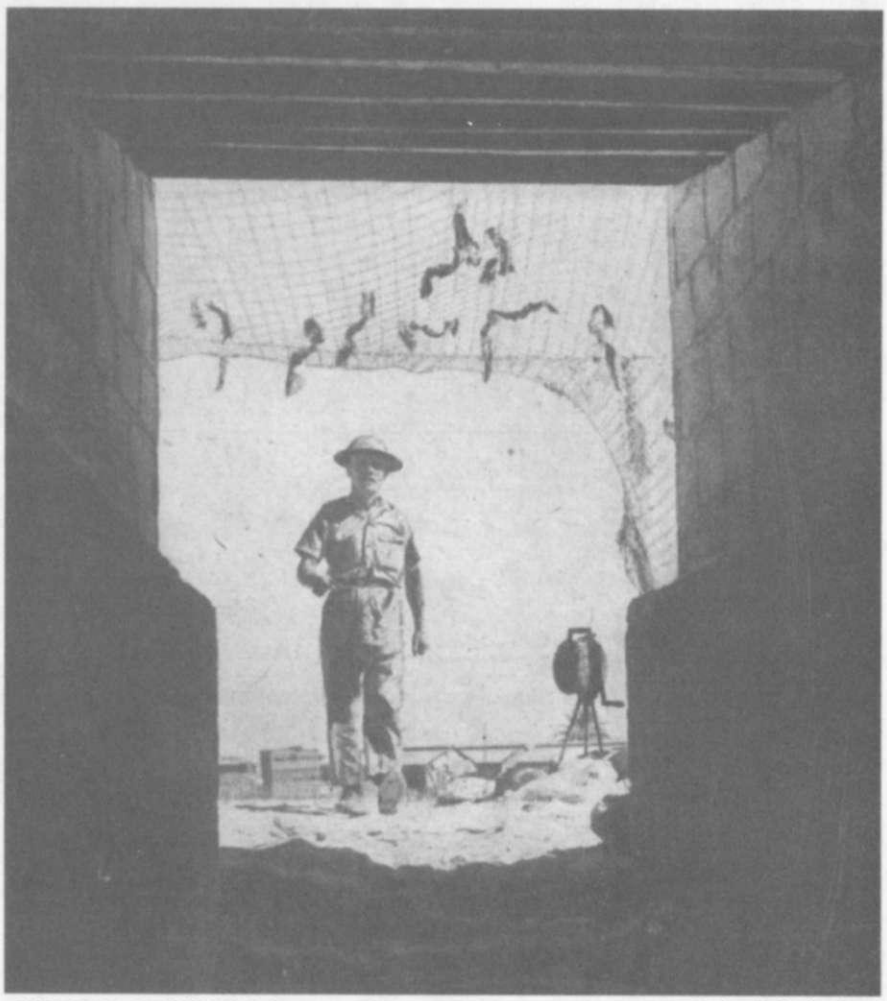
British soldiers in Libya with their motor cycles have stopped to read the message sent to General Wavell by Mr. Anthony Eden, then Secretary of State for War, in the second week in December. Offering the congratulations of all ranks of the Army on the great victory in the Western Desert, Mr. Eden added, "Your brilliant stroke has delighted us and filled us all with pride."

Like the Italian Navy, Egypt's contains several small vessels designed and used for the conveyance of water, and as likely as not these vessels were now brought into service.

For both besiegers and besieged the weather was now decidedly unpleasant. Towards the end of December and in the opening weeks of January the weather on the Libyan coast is usually regarded as being at its worst. Strong gales sweep in from the south, giving rise to sand storms which make aerial reconnaissance next to impossible and, indeed, make it difficult for aeroplanes either to take off or to land, so often is the ground obliterated by the heavy, dust-laden clouds. Blowing as they do from the heart of the sun-baked Sahara, these simoons are as fiercely hot in the summer as they are bitterly cold in the winter; and now it was winter, and the men who had marched miles in the blazing sun shivered at night about their camp fires.

Christmas brought no lull in the desert war. On December 23 Cairo announced that "Our artillery has continued to harass the enemy inside the defences of Bardia, while our preparations outside are progressing," and on December 28 a similar statement was supplemented by the words, "Operations by our mobile detachments to clear the country to the westwards are proceeding." Then it went on to announce that the number of prisoners counted to date since the beginning of the operations in the Western Desert now numbered 38,114, of whom 24,845 were Italian officers and other ranks.

Just after Christmas British G.H.Q. in Cairo stated that Bardia's garrison, harassed by our artillery fire, continued passively to await events. What else, indeed, could they do, cut off as they were from their comrades to the west? These comrades themselves were threatened, for the first news from the Western Desert in 1941 was to the effect that British armoured car patrols had penetrated over 70 miles into Libya, reaching a point only a few miles south of Tobruk. There were skirmishes with Italian columns, but these, it was reported, fled in surprise when they found themselves being challenged by the British advance guard.



THE ARMY OF THE NILE far out in the desert has had to find everything for itself, for in these dreary wastes there are no buildings that can be used as headquarters or billets. Here the problem of finding accommodation for headquarters has been solved by digging deep, and these stairs give access to a dugout fairly safe—and, what is more, comfortably cool.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright

How the Indians Triumphed in the Desert War

In General Wavell's smashing victory over the Italians in the Western Desert, a great part was played by men of the Indian Army ; in particular Indian troops distinguished themselves in the operations against Sidi Barrani's system of forts. Here we give details of the fighting as disclosed in communiqués issued from New Delhi.

AMONG the first troops to go "over the top" in the Army of the Nile's great onslaught on the Italian positions in the Western Desert, it was officially announced in Delhi on December 13, were a number of Indian soldiers. Moslems and Sikhs, Rajputs, Jats, Garhwalis, Madrassi—all were mentioned for the gallant part they had played, and were playing, in the battle.

Fuller details of the Indians' exploits were given in a communiqué issued by the Indian High Command on December 26.

"Between December 6 and 7," it said, "an Indian division left their concentration area near Mersa Matruh and concentrated, apparently unobserved, after a 25-30 miles march. On the following day the division moved some 50 miles farther to the west into an area about 15 miles south-east of Nibeiwa Camp, where the Italian armoured forces under General Maletti were located. These included elements of a Blackshirt division. Here our troops were joined by armoured units.

"The Italian positions had been reconnoitred during the hours of darkness, and it was found that the defences were definitely weaker on the south-west than elsewhere. It was accordingly decided to attack the camp from the south-west, and at the same time make a move with some artillery and infantry to create the impression of an attack from the south-east. During the night on December 8-9 our troops moved to their assembly positions of attack, their movements being covered by aircraft which flew over the camp and dropped bombs. Artillery was drawn up into position within 700 yards of the enemy forces. The attack began at 7 o'clock on the morning of the 9th, and was preceded by short but heavy concentration of artillery fire on the enemy defences. Simultaneously our tanks attacked and reached the defences about 7 a.m. They were followed closely by British and Indian infantry which had been brought up in motor transport to within 800 yards of the enemy positions.

"The tank attack was covered by a smoke screen, and broke through the enemy lines. Many enemy tanks were caught while warming up their engines. They were fired on while still in a row, and were soon on fire. The Italians were evidently heavily shaken by the tank attack following so closely on the artillery bombardment and by the almost simultaneous arrival of British and Indian infantry who swept through the camp. There was, however, considerable resistance, especially in the south-east corner of the camp, where hand-to-hand fighting took place. By a quarter to nine the whole of this defensive camp was ours. Some 2,000 prisoners were taken immediately ; 30 enemy tanks were destroyed and 20-30 guns of various calibre captured in addition to many rounds of ammunition.

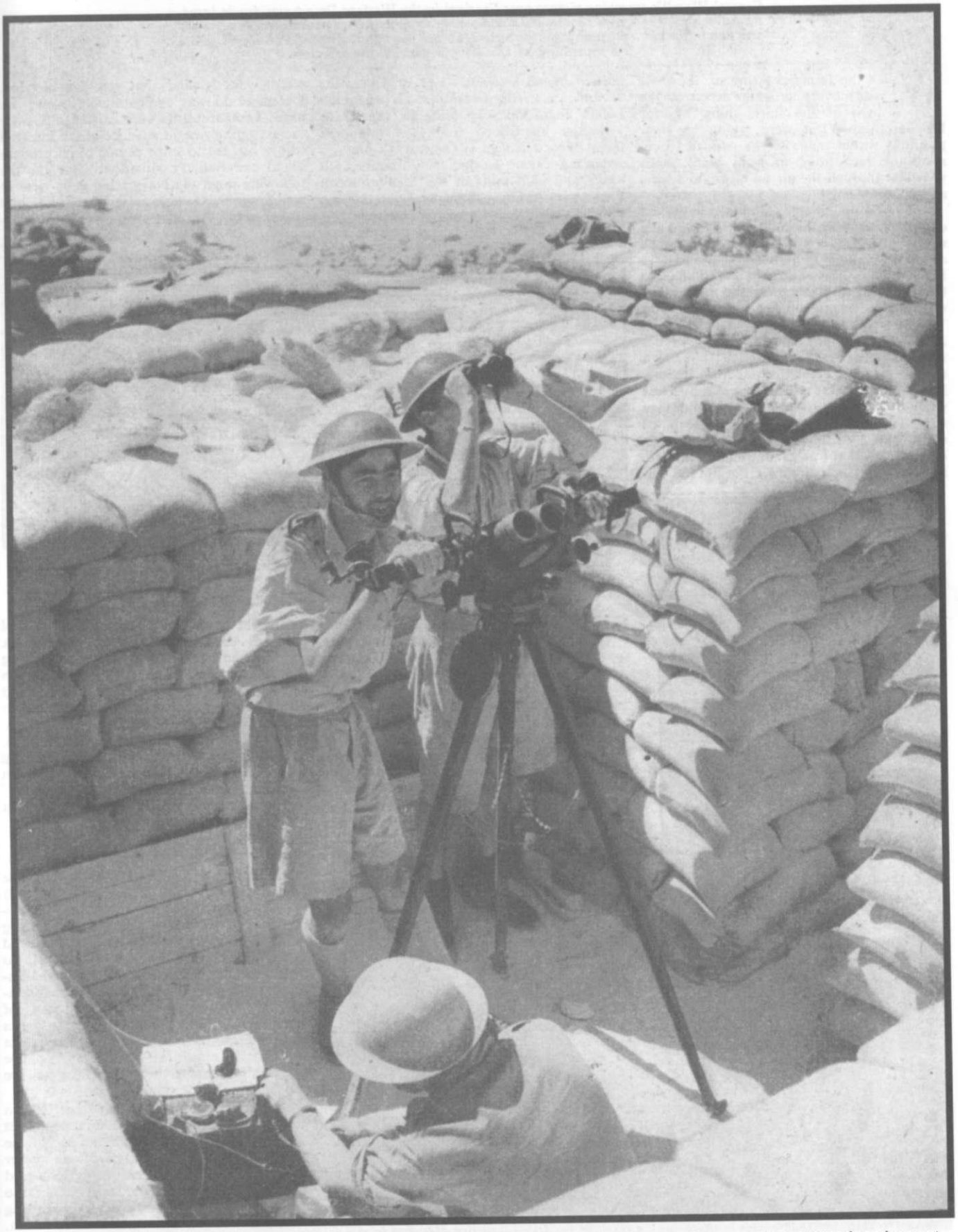
"The Indian division then moved north to Himaref, which formed part of another Italian defensive position. An attack was launched along the normal line of entry into the camp. Our tanks entered, followed by two infantry battalions, one British and one Indian, who swept to the right and left respectively. A further infantry battalion formed a defensive flank to the east to guard against any possible counter-attack. Our attack was completely successful, and 3,000 prisoners and many guns were taken.

"Simultaneously other troops of the division attacked the Italian position of Somaref. This was executed by a detachment of tanks and an Indian battalion. These tanks ran into an enemy counter-attack. One company of Indian troops got out of lorries and, bringing their automatic weapons into action, killed about 400 of the enemy, while another company captured about 700 more. Altogether 1,000 prisoners were taken in this action. The main position at Somaref was occupied early next morning.

"The attack was continued on December 10 against further minor positions between Somaref and Sidi Barrani more Italian prisoners being captured. In the afternoon an attack started by artillery and tanks was launched to secure the Sidi Barrani road to the east of that place. This attack reached its objectives quickly, opposition being only slight. The next morning our operations were continued to draw the enemy in Sidi Barrani, and were carried out in cooperation with other of our forces operating to the east. In this fight the remnants of a Blackshirt division of the Libyan Division were caught and surrendered. Some 3,000 to 4,000 more prisoners were taken. Then the Indian units proceeded to mop up the area."

Indian Troops held an honoured place in the Army of the Nile which advanced so triumphantly across the Western Desert. These men of an Indian division are part of a tank-hunting squad; between them are two anti-tank guns. The men are armed with rifles and hand grenades. The bottles in front of the soldiers are "Molotov cocktails"—most effective weapons for dealing with tanks. *Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright*

Unhappy the Caproni They Happen to Spot



IN THE WESTERN DESERT these men on the look-out for enemy aircraft have as their only protection a small sand-bagged emplacement, which leaves them very much exposed to machine-gun fire from dive-bombers. The spotter-telescope crew consists of three men: one scans the sky with binoculars to give warning of the approach of hostile aircraft, another operates the "spotter," while the third is at the field telephone that keeps contact with the anti-aircraft guns.

Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright

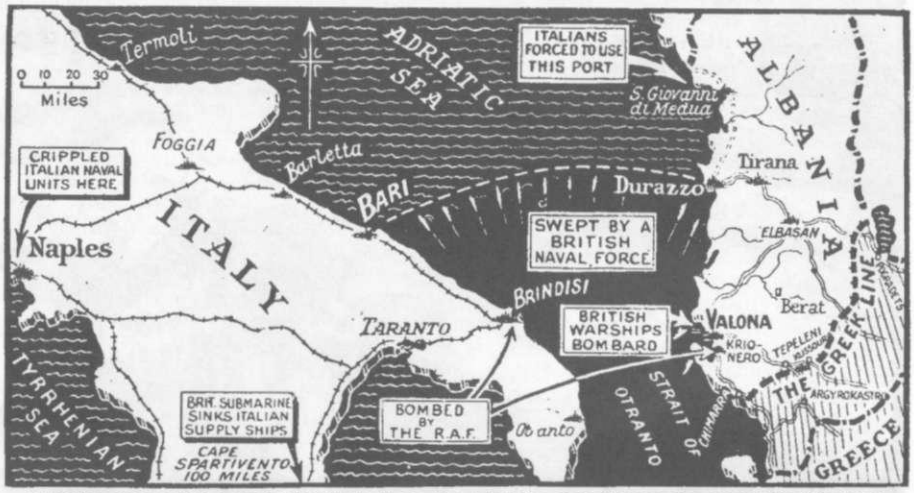
Our Navy's Contribution to Italy's Defeat

General Wavell's smashing victory over Graziani in the Western Desert was due in large measure to the complete coordination and perfect timing of the Imperial forces on land, sea, and in the air. In other pages we have described the fighting on land ; now we go on to tell something of the Navy's part in the triumph.

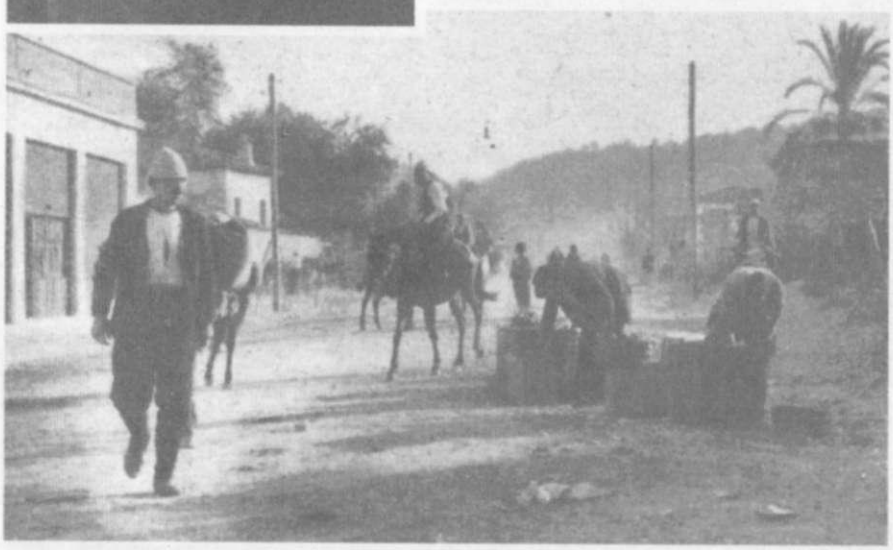
WHILE the Imperial Army of the Nile was moving across the desert by the light of the stars, ships of our Mediterranean Fleet were taking up their positions within range of the African shore, ready at zero hour to send great shells whistling through the air on Graziani's forts and encampments.

The naval operations were timed in perfect coordination with the military. During the night of December 8 the Italian base camps at Maktila and Sidi Barrani itself were bombarded by heavy and light units, and these bombardments—highly successful they proved to be—were carried out in cooperation with 'planes of the Fleet Air Arm and the Royal Air Force. Aircraft reported that all salvoes fell in the target area. The next night saw a repetition of the bombardment from the sea. By December 10 the enemy were in full retreat westwards along the coastal road, and they were speeded on their march by our naval units, who shelled the Italian columns seen on the roads in the neighbourhood of Sollum. Sollum was again a target during the important period between 1 a.m. on December 11 and 1 a.m. on December 12, when the Italian command was doing its utmost to withdraw its troops from the imminent threat of encirclement by General O'Connor's armoured units. During the 24 hours both heavy and light units of the Mediterranean Fleet were firing practically continuously, and the range was frequently closed so that pom-poms could be used when the enemy personnel abandoned their armoured vehicles. The Italian shore batteries fired in reply but no hits were sustained by any of the ships.

During December 12 low visibility curtailed naval bombardment, but many of the ships were engaged in conveying supplies to our forward troops—now many miles beyond their advanced bases—and in evacuating the thousands of prisoners whose numbers were growing hour by hour. This called for a high degree of seamanship, owing to the strong westerly winds that were then blowing. December 13 was comparatively quiet ; no naval bombardments were carried out, since the exceedingly rapid advance of the Imperial troops had led to some degree of uncertainty as to the military situation. But on the following night the Navy's big guns were in action again, blazing away at Bardia, and during the same night Swordfish aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm carried out a heavy attack on the enemy harbour of Tripoli, dropping four tons of bombs, scoring direct hits on supply ships lying alongside the jetties, and giving rise to numerous fires and explosions among the warehouses and supply dumps. Once again enemy opposition was ineffective. An attack by E-boats on the bombarding ship off Bardia was driven off, and on December 14 the Italian submarine "Naiade," which attempted to interfere with our operations, was promptly sunk.



NAVAL AND R.A.F. OPERATIONS in Italy, the Adriatic, and Albania are shown in this map, together with the extent of the sweep of Vice-Admiral Pridham-Wippel's ships on December 18, 1940. The bombardment of Valona by battleships under the command of Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham, C.-in-C. of the Mediterranean Fleet, took place on the same day as the sweep.
Courtesy of "The Daily Telegraph"



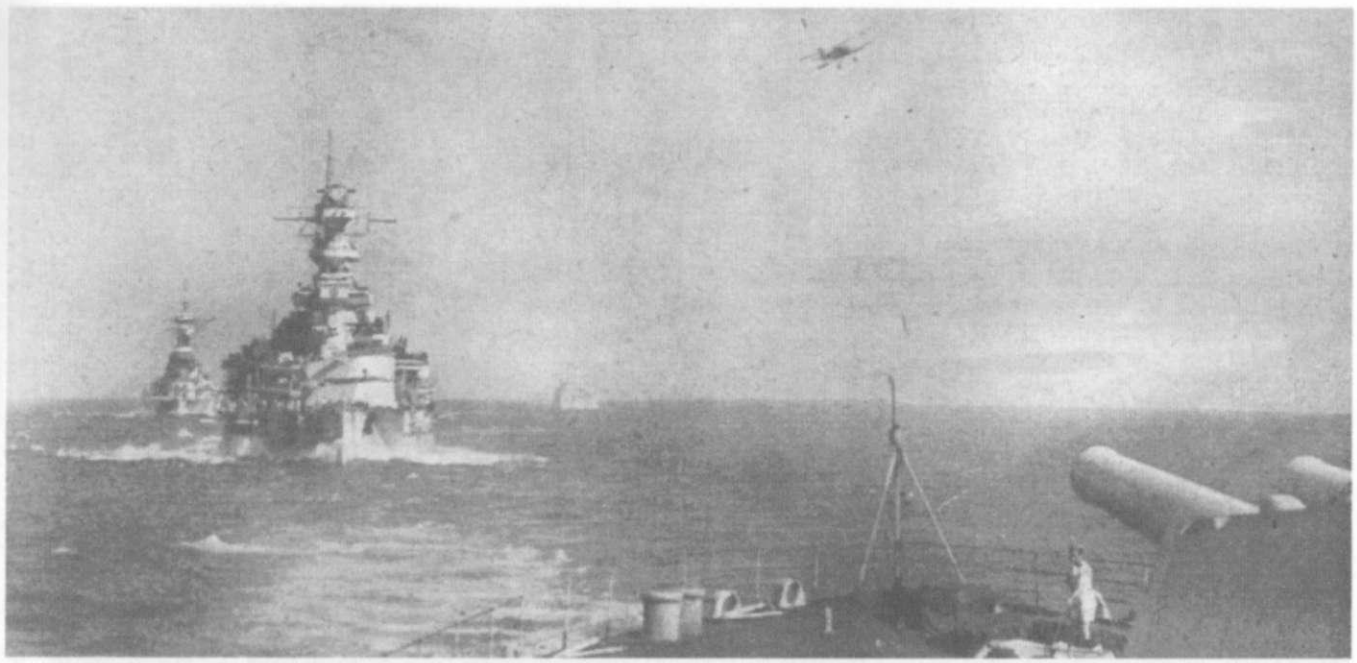
WAR IN THE ADRIATIC—this in effect was the result of the daring incursion described in this page. Vice-Admiral Pridham-Wippel, who commanded the squadron of cruisers and destroyers, was operating in familiar waters as he served in the Adriatic during the last war ; the photograph, top, shows him as a Captain. In the lower photograph is one of the streets of Valona, the port which was shelled by the British battleships. *Photos, G.P.U. and Percy G. Luck*

Daring Raid on Bardia

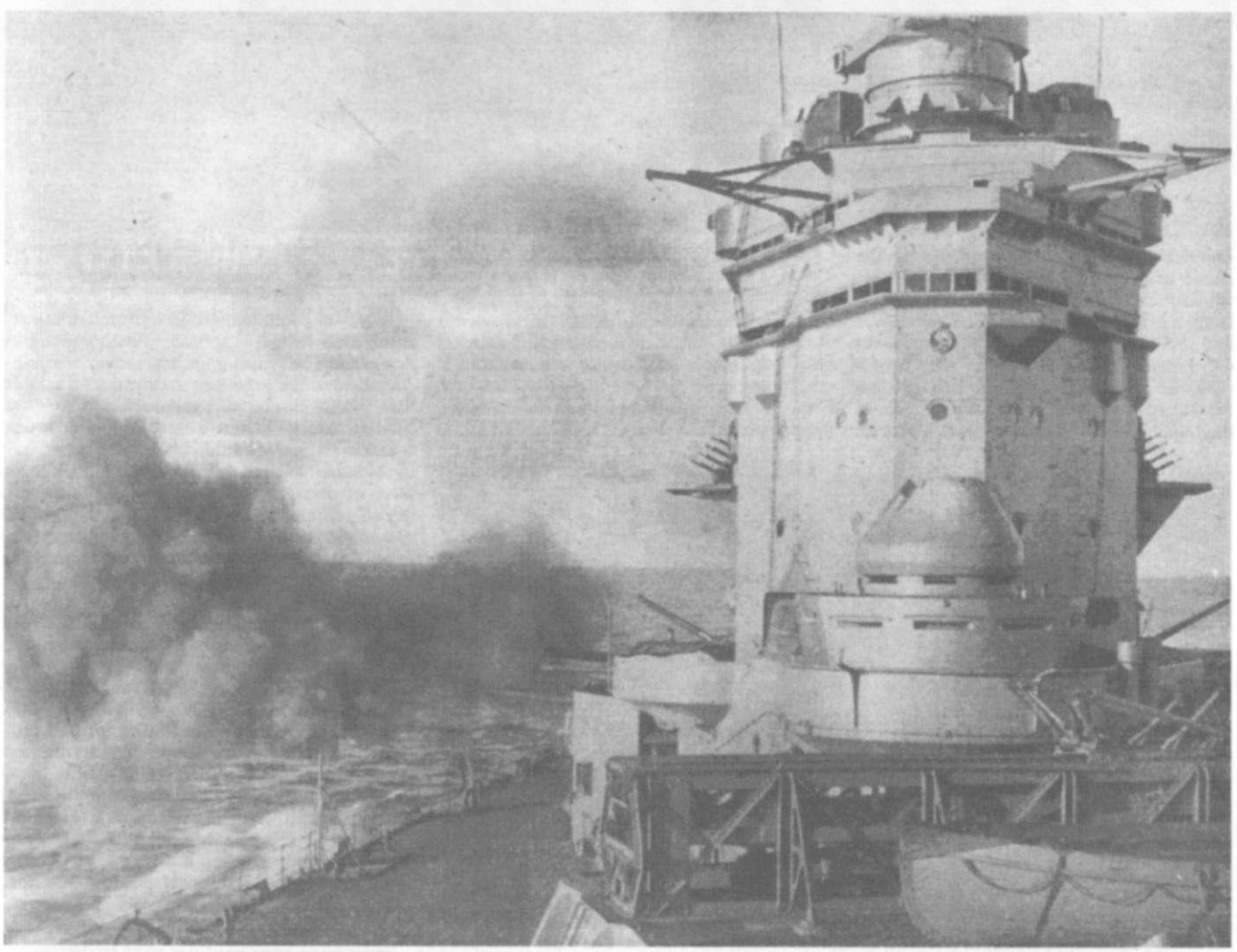
Bardia was again the target during the following days, when at frequent intervals both heavy and light forces of the Mediterranean Fleet pumped shells into the blazing harbour. The Italian shore batteries and torpedo-carrying aircraft did their best to drive off the attackers, but no hits were sustained by any of our ships and the bombardment went on. In the early hours of December 17 a British light unit carried out a very close range attack on the port of Bardia —now lit by huge fires—penetrating into the inner harbour under heavy machine-gun fire and sinking three supply ships.

Not content with battering the Italian positions in Libya, the Mediterranean Fleet suddenly swept northwards, and one of the most striking demonstrations of sea power so far enacted in the present struggle ensued when it slipped through the Straits of Otranto to the Adriatic Sea, with a view to harassing the Italian sea communications with Albania. "On the night of December 18," reported Admiral Cunningham, "a cruising and destroyer force, under the command of Vice-

They Blasted the Italians at Valona and Bardia



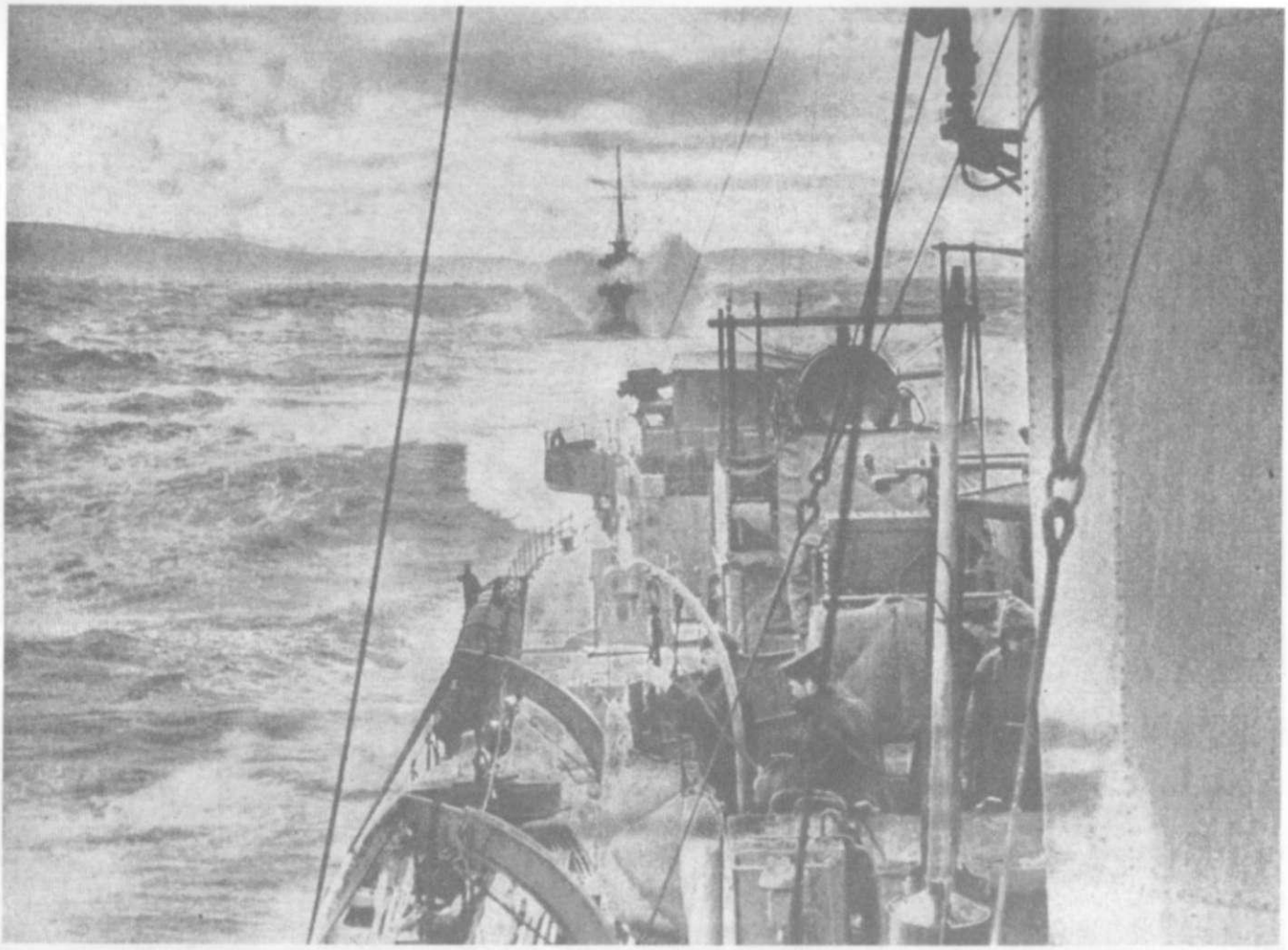
Battleships of the British Fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean took a great part in preparing the way for the advance of Sir Archibald Wavell's army against the Italian positions by bombarding the coast. These units of the Fleet steaming out towards the coast of Libya to attack the enemy positions were photographed from one of the line of ships. Their principal objectives were Bardia and Capuzzo, just west of Sollum, at which the army's attack was directed.



Bristling with guns, a British battleship is here seen at practice. She is firing only her secondary armament of 6-in. guns, of which there are from eight to twelve on most battleships. They are used only at short range. In addition to the 6-in. guns, between six and ten guns of from 15 to 16 ins. are carried. Beside the superstructure can be seen some of the machine-guns, useful in dealing with aerial attack, that form part of the armament of all warships.

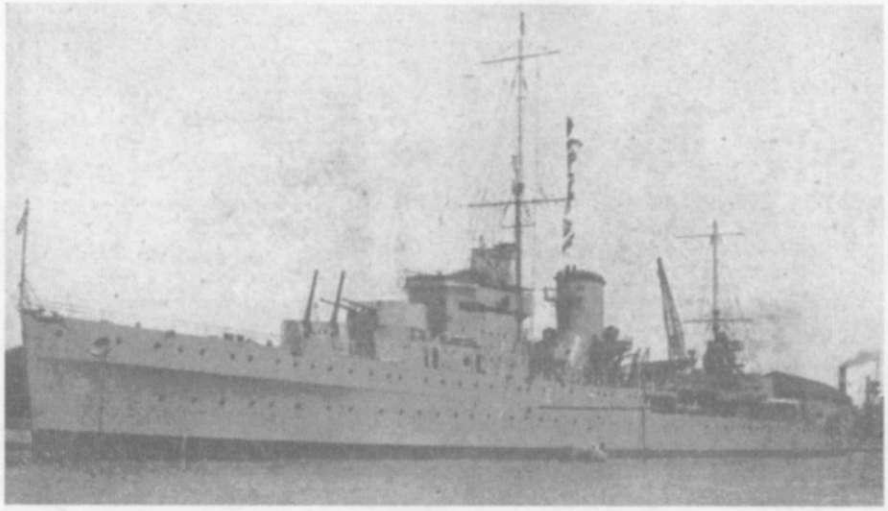
Photos, British Official : Crown Copyright

Cunningham Gives the Lie to Mussolini



DESTROYERS took part in the sweep of the Adriatic and in the subsequent bombardment of Valona on December 18, 1940, for they are the watch-dogs of all the big ships at sea, their duty being to ward off enemy submarines or, if it is a Fleet action, to act as "mosquito" ships, dashing in to attack the enemy with torpedoes at close quarters. *Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright*

Admiral H. D. Pridham-Wippell, swept the Adriatic as far north as Bari and Durazzo, when they encountered no enemy shipping." During the same night a force of battleships under the command of the Commander-in-Chief himself passed through the Straits of Otranto and carried out a heavy bombardment of Valona, the vital supply port of the Italian forces in southern Albania. Nearly a hundred tons of high-explosive shells were fired, and it may be presumed that not only Valona but Saseno, the Italian island at the entrance to the bay, received due attention. Throughout these operations no enemy opposition of any kind was encountered.

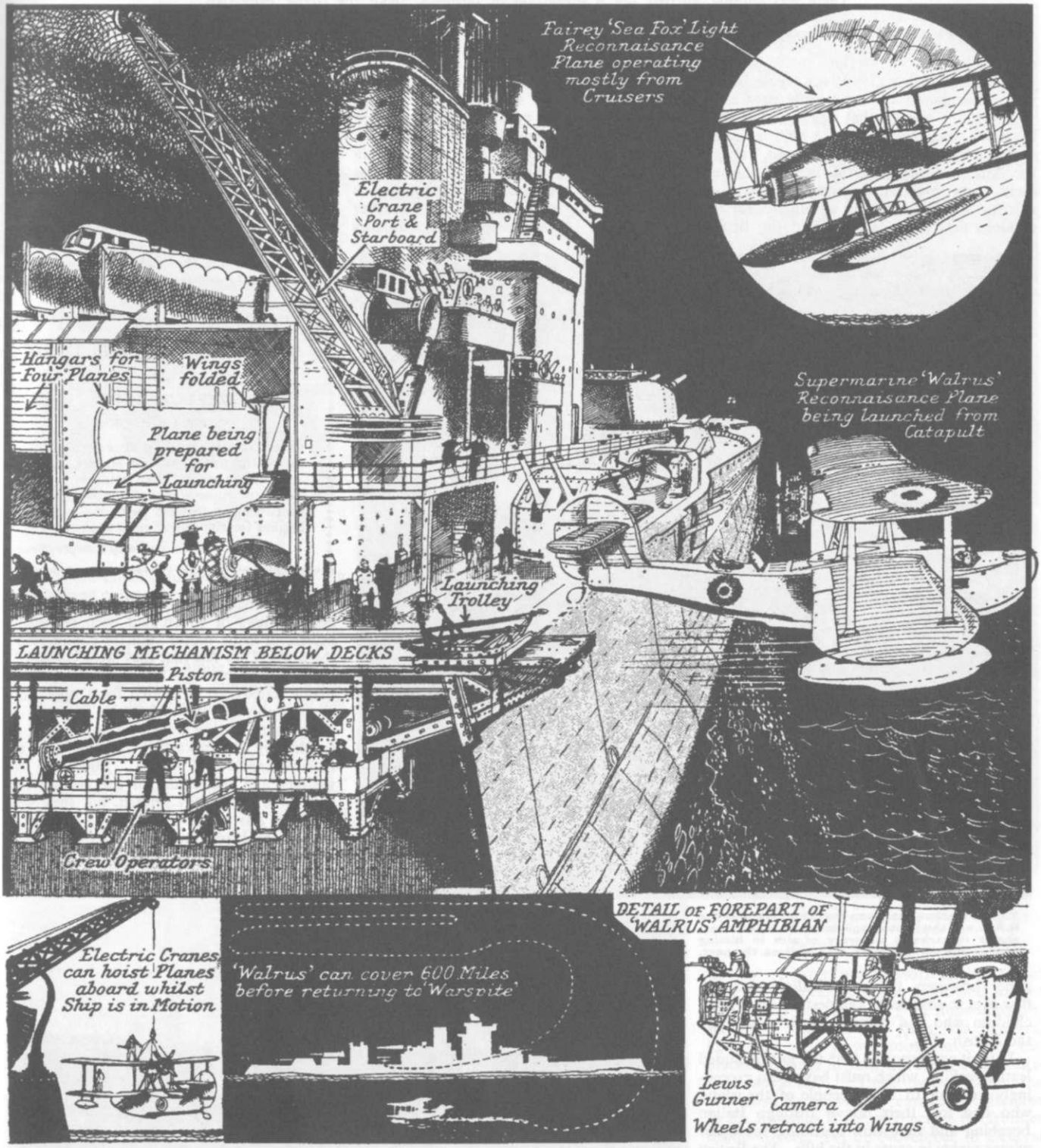


H.M.S. "ORION," a cruiser of 7,215 tons completed in 1932, was Vice-Admiral Pridham-Wippell's flagship in his sweep of the Adriatic on December 18. No Italian ships were encountered, but the Fleet ran into a field of waterspouts and the weather was decidedly unpleasant—a strong nor'-wester blowing, with bad visibility and a high sea. Despite the hoped-for possibility of an enemy appearance, the ship's cooks went on with preparing the Xmas menu. *Photo. Sport & General*

In yet another quarter Italy felt the heavy hand of British sea power. Since the Fleet Air Arm's smashing attack on Taranto Italian convoys to North Africa had avoided the direct route southwards across the Mediterranean, and were developing instead a much longer route, by way of the Straits of Messina and then round the north and west of Sicily. But now even this route, within sight of the Italian shores though it was for most of the way, was no longer safe. An official Admiralty communiqué issued on December 20 stated that H.M. Submarine "Truant" (Lt.-Comdr. H. A. V. Haggard, R.N.) had been operating with great success against the Italian sea communications off the south of Italy. During the night of December 13-14 H.M.S. "Truant" attacked an escorted convoy of heavily-laden supply ships off Cape Spartivento (the very tip of the Italian boot, near the southern entrance to the Straits of Messina). One of the enemy supply ships was sunk, and a second possibly sunk. During the next night H.M.S. "Truant" torpedoed and sank a large Italian tanker, deeply laden and steering south, off the Calabrian coast of southern Italy.

In the light of these operations, Mussolini must have been hard put to it to decide what portion of the Mediterranean or of the Adriatic might still be described as "ours."

Catapulted into Action from a Ship at Sea


Fairey 'Sea Fox' Light Reconnaisance Plane operating mostly from Cruisers
Electric Crane Port & Starboard
Hangars for Four 'Planes
Wings folded
Plane being prepared for Launching
Supermarine 'Walrus' Reconnaisance Plane being launched from Catapult
Launching Trolley
LAUNCHING MECHANISM BELOW DECKS
Piston
Cable
Crew Operators
Electric Cranes can hoist 'Planes aboard whilst Ship is in Motion
'Walrus' can cover 600 Miles before returning to 'Warspite'
DETAIL OF FOREPART OF 'WALRUS' AMPHIBIAN
Lewis Gunner
Camera
Wheels retract into Wings

Even before the last war, launching aircraft by catapult was the subject of experiments, but it is only of late years that the technique has reached its present high state of development. Today, every capital ship and nearly every cruiser carries one or more aircraft for scouting and other purposes.

Time and again the value of these ship-carried 'planes has been proved. Thus in the action off Montevideo on December 13, 1939—the Battle of the River Plate—the small Fairey Sea Fox, which has a speed of 125 m.p.h. and can stay in the air for four hours at a time, was catapulted from the deck of H.M.S. "Ajax" and contributed in large measure to the deadly aim of the British gunlayers. Again, when H.M.S. "Warspite" entered Narvik Fjord on April 13, and smashed the Nazi destroyers one of our aircraft flew back along the course she had come and sank a U-boat which was following in the great ship's wake.

HOW A 'PLANE LEAVES ITS FLOATING AERODROME

Specially drawn for
THE WAR ILLUSTRATED
by Haworth

Here in this diagrammatic drawing we have an impression of the Supermarine Walrus being launched from the decks of H.M.S. "Warspite," the battleship which was Admiral Cunningham's flagship in his incursion, successful as it was daring, into the Adriatic just before Christmas, 1940.

The aircraft are housed in hangars on the deck, immediately below which is the launching mechanism. The 'plane is placed on the launching trolley, whence it is catapulted into the air. Its flight completed—a Walrus can cover some 600 miles before re-fuelling—the 'plane is hoisted aboard whilst the ship is still in motion by electric cranes. Detail of the forepart of the Walrus Amphibian is shown at the foot of the diagram, and in the circle appears a Fairey Sea Fox.

The Supermarine Walrus is strongly built, and can ride out heavy weather; it has a speed of 130 m.p.h. and a range of some 600 miles. The wheels when not required are retractable.

Slow but Sure Was the Greeks' Progress

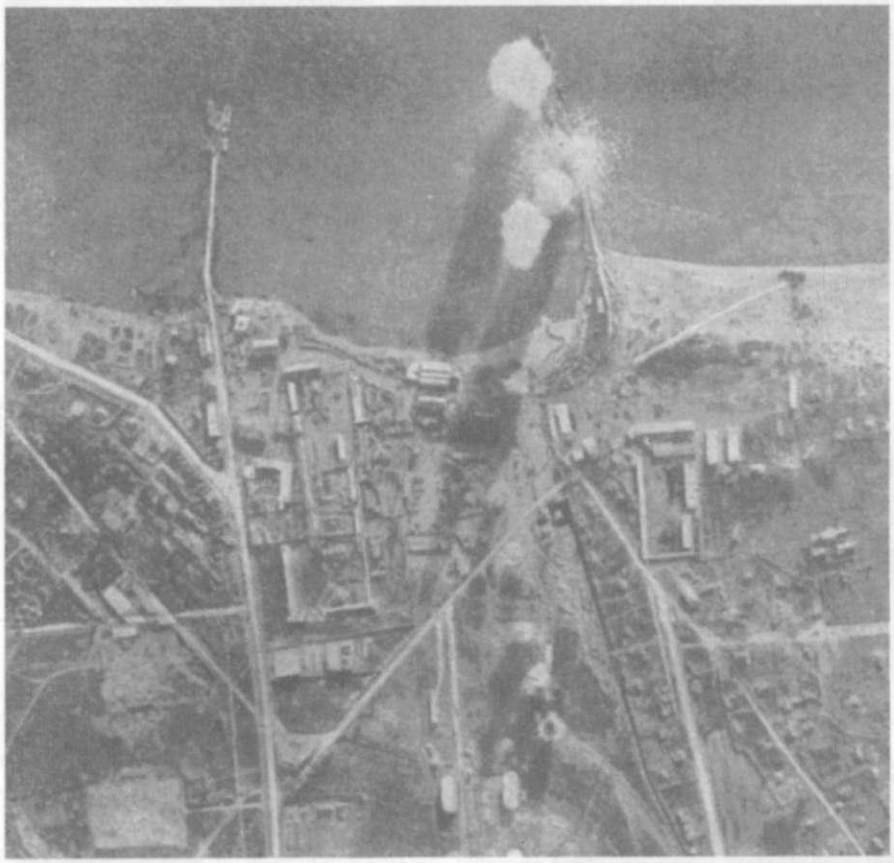
There was nothing hurried, not a suggestion of rashness, about the Greek campaign against the Italians in the mountains of Albania. Rather it was a question of slow but sustained pressure, so that step by step the enemy were driven back and forced to cede one town, abandon one line of defence, after the other.

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1940, will long be remembered by the people of Corfu, for it was on that day that the little town was twice raided—first by British airmen and then by Italian. "British airmen," stated the Athens newspaper "Estia," "showed their truly civilized nature by dropping Christmas gifts from their aeroplanes for the children of Corfu. Hardly had the British gone, however, than the Italian assassins flew over to sow death and destruction among children who had barely had time to enjoy the British gifts."

Later it was reported that the gifts included leather jerkins, which must have been exceedingly welcome to those people of the island who had lost their homes through Italian bombing and were now spending the bitter winter nights in caves in the hills. The British airmen flew so low that the crew of one machine said that they were able to see an old woman standing before her cottage, signalling vigorously that one of the parcels should be dropped at her doorstep! As for Italians, their gifts were bombs, and they left behind them 15 killed and some 30 wounded.

On the mainland the Greek advance went on unchecked. It was announced in Athens on December 23 that the Greek forces had captured the town of Chimara (Himara), on the Adriatic coast, some 30 miles south of Valona. For ten days the Italian High Command strove its utmost to hold the town. Italian infantry and artillery were strongly entrenched on two peaks to the west and south-west, and for days their airmen bombed and machine-gunned the only road along the coast. Yet the Greeks pressed on across the mountains, repeating the flanking tactics which had proved so successful in earlier engagements. Overcoming terrific obstacles—the precipitous country, the bitter weather (the ground was several feet deep in snow) and determined enemy resistance—they looked down at length on the little town, and once again the Italians were forced to retreat. Some managed to escape along the road to the north, but a complete battalion of Blackshirts, the 153rd, consisting of 30 officers and 800 men, were compelled to surrender, together with the whole of their material. Questioned after the battle, some of the prisoners explained the disaster by the British naval bombardment of Valona on December 18, news of which had been spread by drivers of army motor vehicles coming from the port. They felt that they were cut off.

Just after Christmas the Greek High Command stated that "limited local operations were continuing successfully." These operations were, for the most part, in the triangle formed by Argyrokastro, Tepelini, and the recently-captured Chimara. Such was the weather and the nature of the ground that they were necessarily limited, but they were none the less highly successful: a number of guns were taken and the toll of prisoners grew apace as the ground from which the Italians had been driven was mopped up.



Valona Harbour has been heavily attacked by the R.A.F., and this photograph, taken from a bomber, shows remarkable accuracy of aim in hitting one of the narrow piers that enclose the port.

THE POETS & THE WAR

XLII

GREECE, 1940

By I.F.B.

Greece, undismayed, in ages gone
Saved the world's soul at Marathon.
A darkness greater than before
Seeks to eclipse the world once more:
So Greece, in fearless, swift disdain,
Strikes for the soul of man again.

—*Daily Telegraph*

With Valona bombed and bombarded as to be practically useless, the little port of Chimara might have been valuable to the Italians, though, as can be seen, it does not offer much accommodation for shipping. On December 23, 1940, however, it was announced in Athens that it had been captured by the victorious Greek Army. *Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright; and P. G. Luck*

Chimara's Fall Opened the Road to Valona

Then the Greeks pushed on, never giving the Italians time to re-form and consolidate a fresh position. A two-pronged attack was developed towards Valona, from Chimara on the one side and Tepelini on the other. Progress was most marked along the coast, where the Greeks secured the mountains whose cliffs rose into the clouds 4,000 to 6,000 feet above the snow-bound road beside the Adriatic along which the Italians were struggling.

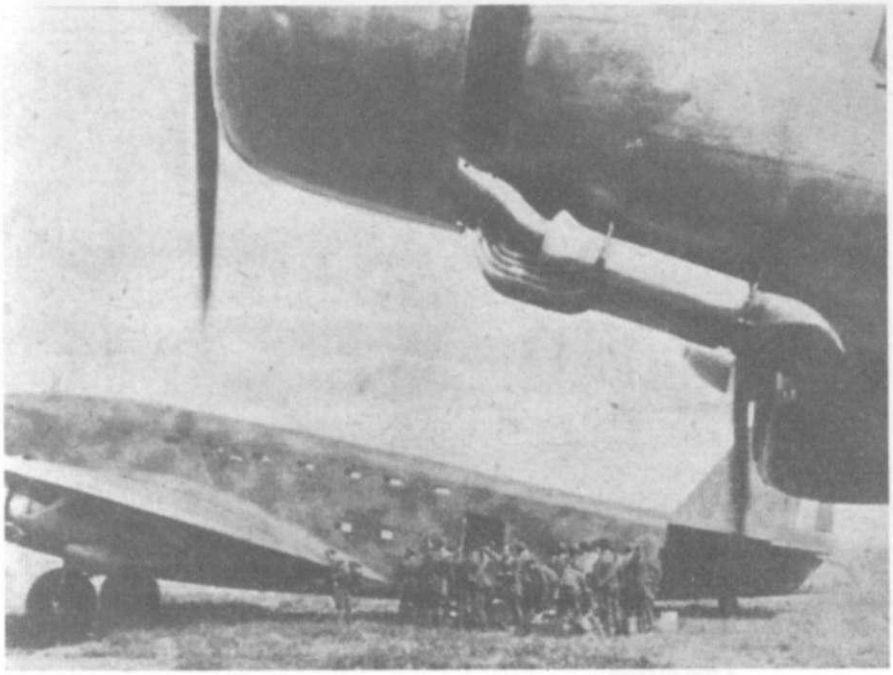
By the end of the year the war had lasted a little more than two months. On October 27, the day before the Italians started their invasion, the Italian General Rossi issued an Order of the Day. "In a few hours," he said, "you will be called upon to cross the border into Greece. . . . You will be worthy of your predecessors in the Great War, and the campaigns in Spain and Africa. The enemy cannot resist your impetuous onslaught. Your glorious flags and banners, kissed by victory, will soon wave over the places captured in your headlong and irresistible advance." Three weeks later, the "irresistible advance" carried the Italians to the Kalamas River, well across the frontier inside Greece. Yet on November 18 General Geloso found it necessary to issue an order that "no detachment must retreat from any position without superior orders. Positions must be maintained at all costs. . . ."

But a few weeks more, and the Italians were now no longer in Greece, but in full retreat through Albania. The orders just quoted were captured at the headquarters of the 32nd Infantry of the Siena Division when they were driven out of the positions which they held behind a peak south of Chimara. By the end of the year more than a quarter of Albania had been conquered by the Greeks and they were still advancing.

Greek morale is as high as that of any army can possibly be. Reinforcements for the troops that are gradually driving the Italians out of Albania are seen above on their way to the front. Every man wears the smile of victory.

Mussolini probably regarded the Adriatic as even more "our own sea" than the Mediterranean. But proof that he no longer rules it is given by the photograph below of Italian troop-carrier aeroplanes, the only means of transport, disembarking troops in Albania.

The Greek Prime Minister, General Metaxas, is visiting wounded Greek soldiers in hospital just before Christmas to offer them his good wishes for a speedy recovery.
Photos, G.P.U. and Keystone



Greek Thanksgiving for the Rout of the Invader

The Greek Navy is small, and its largest ship is the "Averoff," on board of which the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church is here seen conducting a thanksgiving service for the successes of the Allies. The "Averoff," a cruiser of 9,450 tons built in 1910, is the only large ship in the Greek Navy, but destroyers built within the last ten years have shown their mettle against Italy's shy warships.

Photo, Keystone

The Second Great Fire of London

In the pages of history and the diarists Pepys and Evelyn we are told of London's Great Fire of 1666 ; now from our personal experience we know of another Great Fire, rivalling the first in its destructiveness though caused not by human carelessness but by inhuman savagery. Below we tell the story of this Second Great Fire of London.

THOUSANDS of incendiary bombs were showered on the City of London on the night of Sunday, December 29, 1940, by Goering's airmen in a savage and wanton attempt to burn down this historic area—the "square mile" packed with irreplaceable architectural treasures, enshrining undying memories of national and civic worthies who raised the City to its present greatness.

This same square mile is probably the world's most dangerous spot from the fire-fighting point of view, and even in peacetime an outbreak here sends men and equipment racing to its aid from all the surrounding fire stations. On Sunday night, of course, the London Fire Brigade was reinforced by that magnificent body of civilian fireman, the A.F.S., and help reached the Metropolitan area from the outlying districts within a radius of some score miles or so. Alongside their comrades of the L.F.B., they toiled all night with hardly a break, until by daylight all the many conflagrations had been got under control and a greater danger had been averted.

Workers making their way to desk or shop or bench on Monday morning found the streets criss-crossed with fire-hoses, into which hundreds of the new motor-pumps were sending water to damp down the piles of still smoking debris. Here and there a roof or some interior woodwork was still blazing, but never after the first few strenuous hours was there much risk of further spread - London's fire-fighters had seen to that before they were relieved at daybreak by others who had stood by ready at their local stations throughout the night.

There were some who would never return to answer the roll, and others lay in hospital beds where their wounds were being cared for. Four firemen were buried beneath a wall which collapsed in City Road ; though flames leapt half-way across the road, their comrades dug with bare hands in the endeavour to save them, but only the bodies were recovered. From every area tales of heroism came in.

Despite everything that men could do, the City suffered grievous loss, and the night of December 29-30 will be remembered with horror. The ancient Guildhall was a blackened shell ; eight of Wren's churches had been destroyed ; a large part of Paternoster Row, the traditional home of booksellers and publishers for centuries, was a smoking ruin. St. Paul's Cathedral had been ringed around by fires that raged in commercial buildings in its Churchyard, but was itself practically unharmed by the conflagrations. Its Chapter House was gutted.

The churches destroyed or gutted included some of the City's finest: St. Lawrence Jewry in Gresham St., the church of the City Corporation ; St. Mary the Virgin, Aldermanbury ; St. Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe ; St. Stephen's, Coleman St. ; St. Vedast, Foster Lane ; Christ Church, Newgate St., in whose galleries the boys of Christ's Hospital used to sit ; St. Anne and St. Agnes, Gresham St. ; and St. Bride's Fleet St. In Gough Square, Dr. Johnson's house was damaged by fire ; so, too, was the Central Criminal Court in the Old Bailey, but prompt action saved it from destruction.

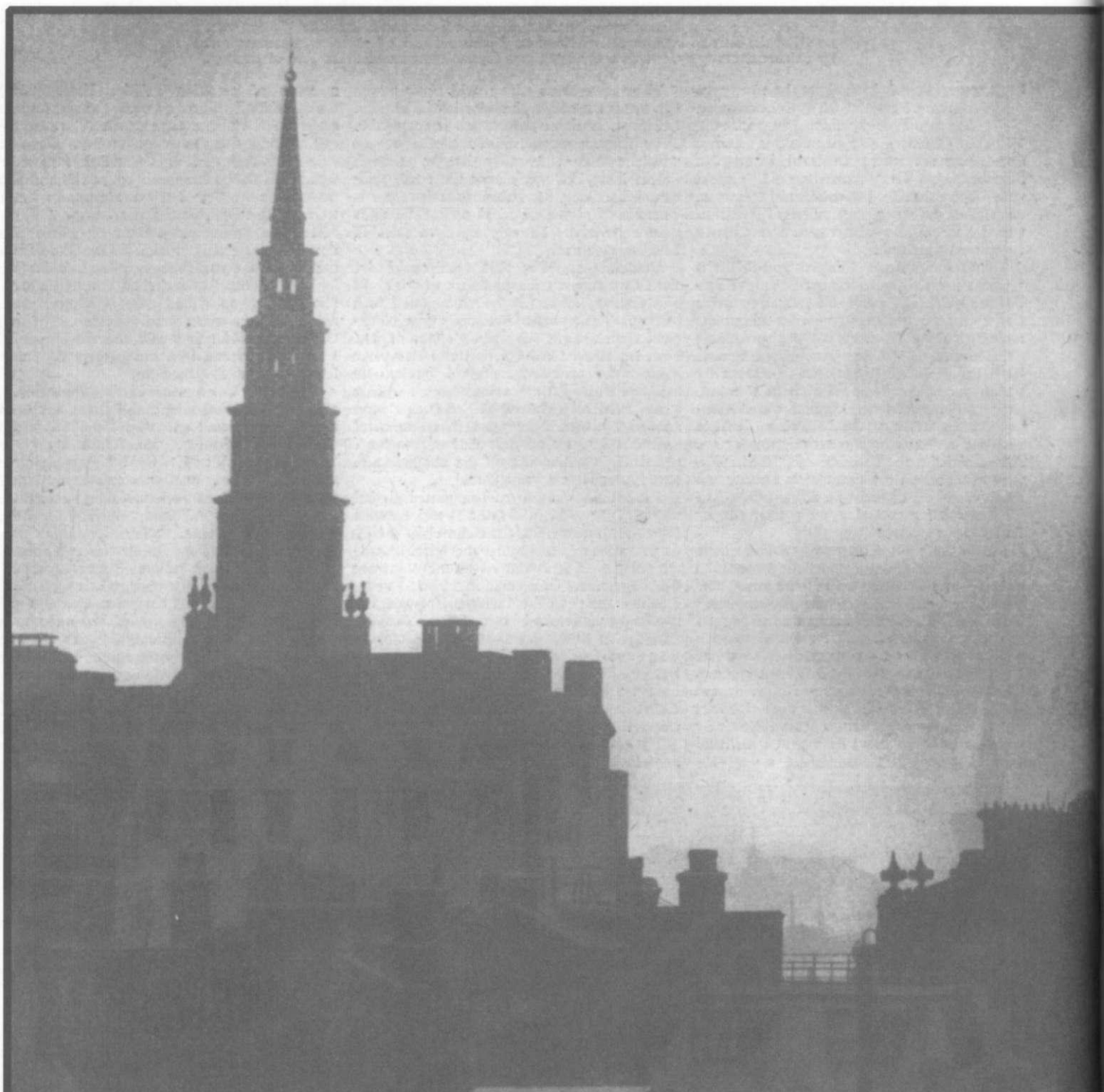
The wreckage of the famous Guildhall was a piteous sight, with the Banqueting Hall a mass of smoking rubble. Fortunately the Guildhall Library, with the Museum and the Art Gallery, were saved. The escape of St. Paul's was due largely to the alert and efficient work of the Cathedral staff of watchers and firemen, who extinguished fire-bombs as they fell on the roof. But to anyone who visited the scene next day and saw how buildings on each side had been burned out it seemed little short of a miracle that somewhere or other the blaze had not spread to the great Church in their midst, at some places only a short span away. Here indeed was evidence of the untiring, skilful and well-directed efforts of London's firemen in the biggest task that had ever come to their lot.

The raid, which began early in the evening, ceased before midnight, and there has been some speculation as to why the Nazis did not carry it further, and follow up the fire-bombs with myriads of high-explosive missiles. The explanation seems to be that the enemy bombers were recalled on account of bad weather conditions prevailing on the Continent. Another theory is that this massed attack on the Capital was intended to be a prelude to an attempted invasion which, for some unexplained reason, was called off.

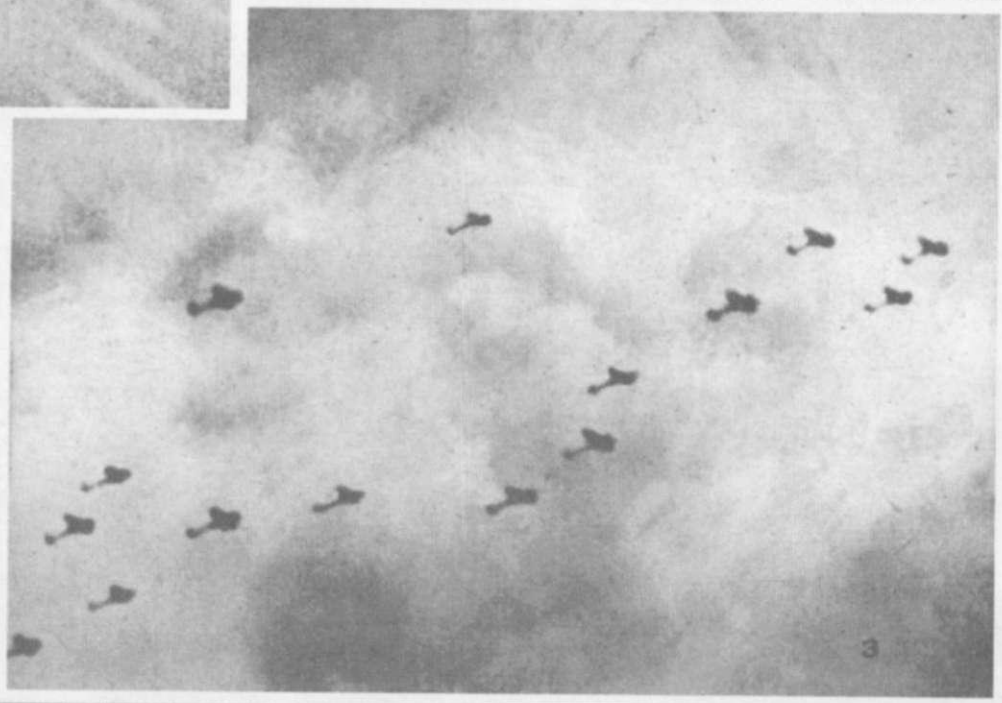
If ever evidence was needed as to how the Nazis misjudge the British temperament it was furnished indubitably by this stupid attack on London's square mile. When the Premier and Mrs. Churchill paid a two-hour visit to the ravaged streets on the next afternoon they were greeted with intense enthusiasm by A.R.P. workers and the public. And there were also cries of "When are we going to give it back to them ?"

MR. AND MRS. CHURCHILL made a lengthy tour of the City of London on December 30, 1940. For two hours they viewed the wanton damage to famous City streets and buildings—the grim results of the Nazis' fierce fire-raid on the previous evening. In particular the Premier noted the ruins of St. Bride's Church, in Fleet Street, and all that was left of the Guildhall, where he had spoken on so many historic occasions. Firemen and demolition squads gave Mr. Churchill a very enthusiastic welcome. *Photo, Topical Press*

Sunday Evening in December: 'A Most Horrid, Malicious, Bloody Fla

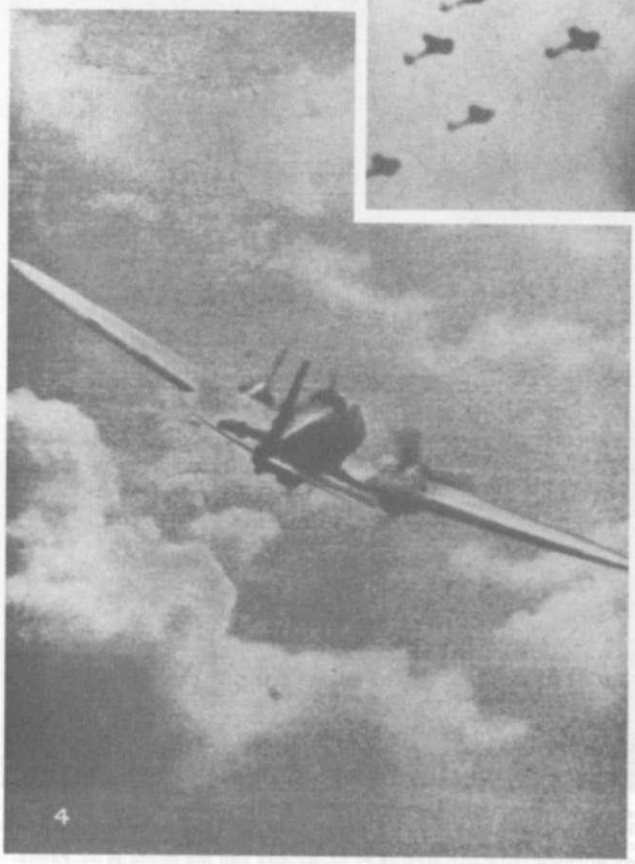


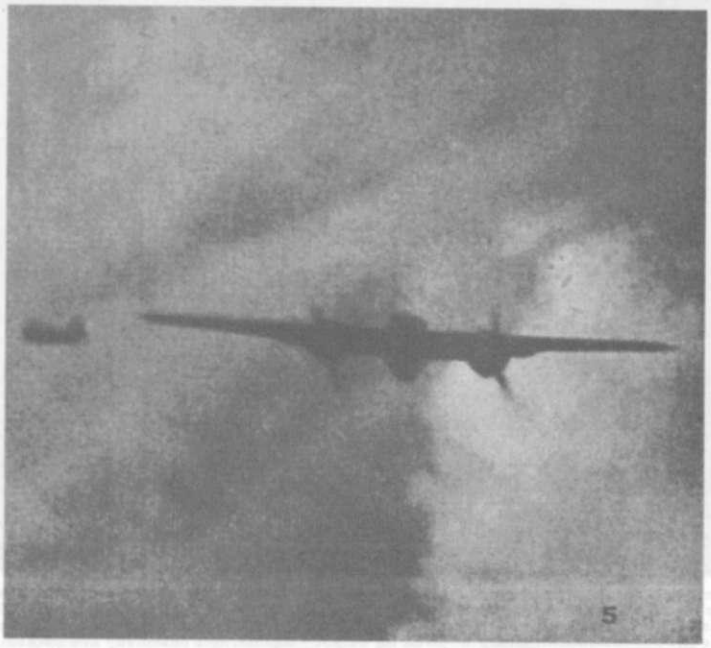
Battle in the Air: 'Shots' With a Camera-Gun



These unique photographs have been enlarged from recent film records taken with camera-guns which are fitted in the wings of Hurricanes and Spitfires; they are loaded with 16 mm. film and "shoot" when and as long as the guns are fired, thus making an automatic record of the firing and its effect. (1) Five Heinkel 111's are being attacked. The aircraft at the bottom right of the formation is receiving a burst of fire as shown by the streaks of light from the tracer bullets. Its port engine is on fire. (2) A Heinkel 111 caught in a burst of fire. (3) Part of a large formation of Heinkel 111's. (4) A Heinkel 111 in flight. (5) A Dornier being heavily attacked. The dark object on the left is one of the crew baling out.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright.





Mighty Blows at the Italians by the R.A.F.

Many pages would be required to do full justice to the part played by the Royal Air Force in the defeat of the Italians in the Western Desert and in support of the Greeks fighting so valiantly against the common foe in the mountains of Albania. Below we give just a suggestion of their mighty operations.

LATER information which becomes available about the British offensive in the Western Desert shows how largely the success of this fine exploit depended upon the splendid work of the Royal Air Force. In the twelve days that followed the attack on Castel Benito (on the night of December 7-8) the Italians lost 144 aircraft for certain, and probably more: eighty-eight of these were destroyed in the air, and fifty-six were captured or destroyed on the ground. Our own losses amounted to thirteen aircraft (five pilots saved); during the five days December 15-19 there were no British losses.

Whatever may be said about the poor morale of the Italian army, its airmen have showed no lack of courage in the Libyan operations, and some of our own airmen expressed the view that the Italian pilots had put up a better fight than those of the Luftwaffe encountered over Britain. In fact, the air arm seemed to be the only fighting force on which Marshal Graziani could count for offensive action during the encirclement of Sidi Barrani, the retreat along the coast, and the defence of Bardia—now being hemmed in by our army. The weakness of the Regia Aeronautica appeared to have lain rather in its aircraft than in its pilots.

A recapitulation of the leading events of the twelve days from December 7-19 is impressive:

December 7-8.—Aerodrome at Castel Benito bombed by the R.A.F. and five hangars put out of action.

December 8-9.—Attack on Benina; when our pilots reported the aerodrome to be carpeted with flame.

December 9.—R.A.F. attack coastal aerodromes, bombing every one from Derna to Sidi Barrani. Our pilots also "thoroughly harassed" Italian troops and transports.

December 10.—El Adem bombed and the aerodrome "gutted."

December 11.—R.A.F. attacked Blackshirt troops retreating towards Sollum, the enemy columns were bombed and machine-gunned and thrown into confusion.

December 18-19.—Our bombers attack the camp at Derna and set it on fire.

Apart from these operations the R.A.F. (aided by the R.A.A.F.) was continually employed in cooperation with our Army and Navy. The Italian air force was compelled to draw back ever farther and to abandon its bases upon which so much labour had been lavished in readiness for the advance on Egypt. On December 22, for example, the Italian air striking base had been shifted to El Adem, some 70 miles back.

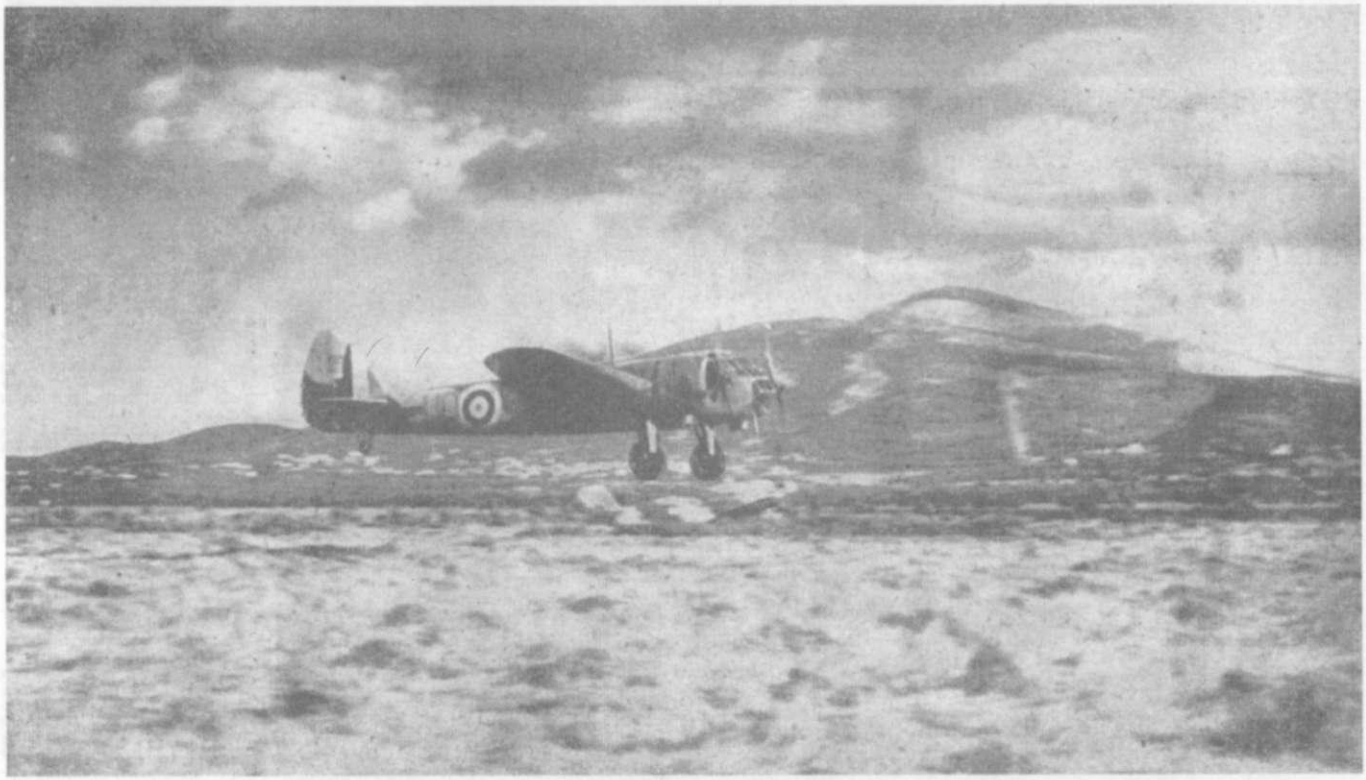
Attack on Castel Benito

Continuing with the battering of enemy aerodromes, the R.A.F. struck again at Castel Benito on Friday night (December 20-21). The attack was made in two waves: the first scored four direct hits on three hangars; eleven enemy aircraft were destroyed by flames or by bombing, and others damaged. The second wave of our bombers obtained seven direct hits on or near hangars, three bombs falling on buildings left unattacked by the first wave; eight enemy aircraft were destroyed. Our aircraft, after bombing the hangars and other buildings with most marked results, dive-attacked and machine-gunned the aerodrome.

On the same night (December 20-21) other of our bombers went westward to raid Benghazi and Berka. Next evening another attack was made on Berka, and Benina also was bombed. Away to the east the harbour and other objectives at Tobruk were attacked. So, under relentless and increasing pressure, the Italians were obliged to withdraw their air bases ever farther into the interior of Libya.

Over Albania our fighters and bombers relentlessly harassed the Italian ground forces, driving off enemy fighter 'planes which sought to protect the hard-pressed columns now trying to find a defensive line that could be held. (Up till December 21 the R.A.F. had lost only nine aircraft in Greece since Italy began her invasion.) By intensive bombing attacks on the Italian mainland ports the R.A.F. stopped the flow of reinforcements and supplies to Albania. Fleet Air Arm machines bombed important islands of the Dodecanese group.

While light and heavy units of our Mediterranean Fleet attacked Valona on the night of Dec. 18, pouring in 100 tons of H.E. shells, the R.A.F. attacked Valona and Krionero from the air. Oil tanks and railways at Brindisi were bombed on December 19. On Saturday (Dec. 21), in a battle over Argyrokastro, nine British fighters attacked fifty Italian 'planes and shot down eight of them. The enemy force consisted of bombers escorted by fighters. Two of our own aircraft were lost in this Homeric battle. R.A.F. heavy bombers flew from Britain on Saturday night to bomb an oil refinery at Porto Marghera, near Venice.



BRISTOL BLENHEIM bombers are among the aircraft used by the R.A.F. (G.) in support of the Greek Army in Albania. Here one of them, its undercarriage lowered in readiness for landing, is returning to its base after a successful raid on the Italian forces. Bristol Blenheims have also done magnificent work in raids on Germany and the invasion ports, and in a modified form the same type has been employed as long-range fighters.

Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright

Sheffield Could Take It As Well As London

"The City of Steel" was bombed by the Nazis on December 12, 1940, and again two days later. Some material damage was done, but the Pioneer Corps, right, were brought on the scene and were soon at work clearing away debris and salving everything that was still of value.

Like London, Sheffield took Nazi frightfulness with a smile, the women no less than the men. Below, a bombed-out family in front of a small house in Sheffield wear a "winning" smile that Hitler and his Nazis would not like to see.

"Carry On" was the slogan of the people of Sheffield, and typical of it is the young woman above sweeping glass from the window of a shop that is "open" in two senses of the word. The glass has gone, but customers will be served as usual.

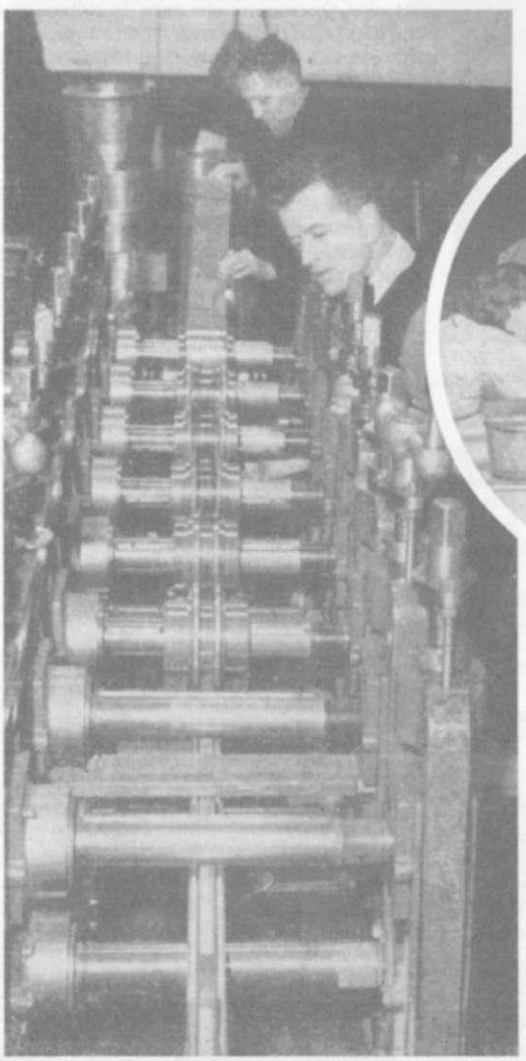
The Ministry of Information did its best to help the people of Sheffield with one of its loudspeaker vans that toured the bombed areas giving advice to the homeless and those who sought shelter. Wherever it stopped people gathered round it, and not a question was unanswered.

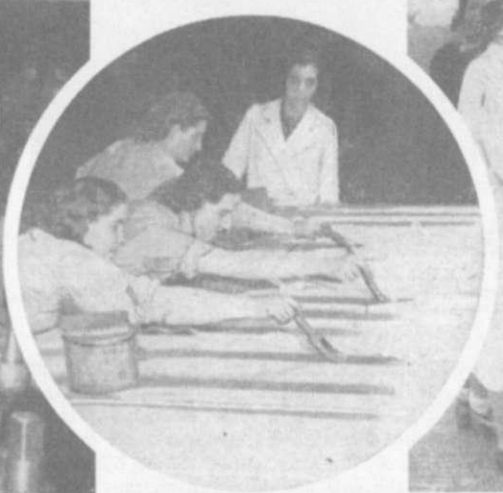
Photos, Central Press and Keystone

'Worthy of the Men Who Fly for Britain'

BOMBERS that will rain destruction on the strongholds of the Axis Powers, under construction (left). In this huge workshop the electrical installation, one of the most important and delicate parts of these huge machines, is being completed. In his broadcast on December 17, 1940 Lord Beaverbrook addressed these words to those engaged in the production of aircraft: "We have the inspiring knowledge that the aircraft we make will be directed by firm and strong hands. It is our task to assure the pilots that the supply is adequate to the necessities and worthy of the men who fly for Britain over land and sea."

Great responsibilities and great risks are the lot of the test pilots who take the bombers on their first flights. Below is one of them chatting with some of the girl workers at the factory after a flight.





Girl workers (circle) applying dope to a completed wing, the last stage in its construction.

MECHANICAL PERFECTION is essential in these monster machines. Men and machines continue to ensure it. Above is a rolling machine fed at one end with raw material and producing a "tophat-shaped" duralumin bar at the other end. These bars form part of the wonderful interior of a bomber (right) 64 feet in length.

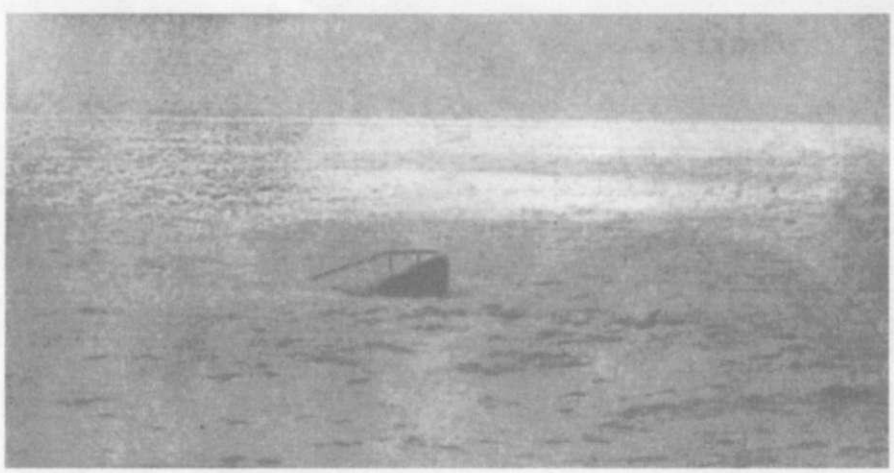
Photos, Fox and Topical

In at the Kill with a 'Terrier of the Sea'

Lying in wait for the convoys that bring food and munitions to Britain are the U-boats of the enemy. And ready for them, too, are the trawlers of the Royal Navy. Sometimes—all too often – the U-boat gets his victim; but often, too, the "sea-terrier" gets his "rat."

It is getting on towards sunset, and the inbound convoy is ploughing steadily along over the last stage of its Atlantic voyage. Already a landfall has been made. The sudden boom of a gun from one of the ships; then a spurt of water where the shell has fallen more than a mile away. A periscope has been sighted. Now watch the escorting anti-submarine trawler go into action.

Round she swings towards the point where that shell fell. The engine-room telegraph rings for full speed and the alarm bell clangs in the mess deck. Little need for the alarm bell because that sound of a gun has brought the men below racing on deck. By the time that the alarm bell is ringing, a broad Scots voice is already reporting up the voice-pipe from the depth charge racks at the stern that all is ready to give that lurking U-boat hell.



THIS ITALIAN SUBMARINE was attacked with depth charges by a British destroyer in the Mediterranean and forced to surface. The conning-tower was shot away and the ammunition in her fore part exploded. The crew were taken aboard the destroyer. The submarine was subsequently sunk by gunfire. *Photo, Associated Press*

And that Scot aft has a personal interest in giving the Germans plenty of hell. Last winter he was not in the Navy. He was a fisherman. He was in a defenceless little fishing fleet in the North Sea which was shelled out of existence by a U-boat, and he spent an hour-and-a-half fighting for life in the icy waters after the Germans had machine-gunned the boats in which he and his mates were trying to escape. That's just one big reason why he joined the Navy. Now he is on the personal warpath.

Every member of the crew is keyed up to top pitch. On the main gun platform above the break of the fo'c'sle they are standing by in the faint and vain hope of some target practice on a real U-boat instead of a barrel. But this is a job for depth charges. High up on the bridge you can feel the rising thrill of the hunt. All is ready. Cigarettes are lit. The young Reserve officer who commands the ship discusses with his two junior officers the probable tactics of the hunted U-boat commander as he tries to escape. A seaman, seated on a high stool before which stands a compass, listens carefully on the earphones as he swings the detector carefully round in search of the German submarine. "Number One"—the First Lieutenant, who will shout the order to release the charges—stands near with another set of earphones in position on his head. The minutes tick by. At last comes the report the whole ship has been waiting for—that the U-boat has been located. A bearing is given. An order is called to the man at the wheel just below the top bridge. Again the fighting trawler swings round, slowed for the moment by the thrust of the rudder hard over. Now she is picking up again, moving to full speed.

The commanding officer bends over another of the copper voice-pipes which sprout around the bridge. He whistles down to the engine-room. "Give her another shovelful and let's have all she's got," is his cheerful order. "Tell the Chief to hold on to his hat and watch his dynamos."

Now the U-boat has been identified and it has been discovered that it is trying to sneak away; it must have tried to circle to safety when it heard the trawler pick up speed again. But the trawler, too, alters course, and is fast closing in. Five hundred yards, three hundred yards, one hundred yards. Stand by. Now! Over the side go the depth charges and the trawler races on. Half-a-minute later the water spouts astern tell that the depth charges have exploded. The little trawler gives a great shudder at the force of the explosions.

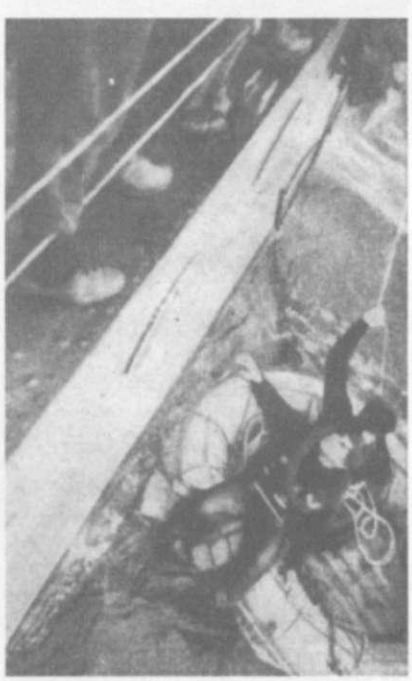
Way below the surface the crew of the U-boat hold their breath in agony as their craft heaves and strains to breaking point at the shattering blast. The submarine heels far over and the lights go out. Way below the sea they are fighting desperately but vainly to escape from the trap. And at the after rail of the trawler the gleeful Scots fisherman is ready again. The trawler turns to run in for the second attack. Now the submarine lies still, either stricken or foxing.

On the platform forward the gunner and his crew look a little glum at being out of the immediate fun. Some of them also have scores to pay off for the strafing which the Germans gave them in the Norwegian fiords months ago. They look up in response to a hail from the bridge. "That last lot was for Namsos," shouts the commanding officer with a grin, and the gun's crew cheer up and laugh. Now the trawler is closing in fast upon the U-boat. Already there is some thin oil on the surface of the sea. It seems that the U-boat is badly hit. Again the depth charges go hurtling over the side; again the explosions and the shuddering of the little ship. This time the swirl of the waters brings black pieces of debris boiling to the surface. This looks like the kill. Cheers from aft suggest that revenge is sweet.

The trawler turns again to investigate. There is a strong smell from the oil which is rising to the surface of the sea, and a small stream of bubbles tells of the death-throes of the U-boat. "The Chief" comes on deck from the engine-room. "Any bodies yet?" he asks grimly. He also has a score to settle. He lost his brother in a minesweeper only a week ago. The engine-room reports that no damage has been done by the shock of the depth charges, except that the clock below there has stopped.

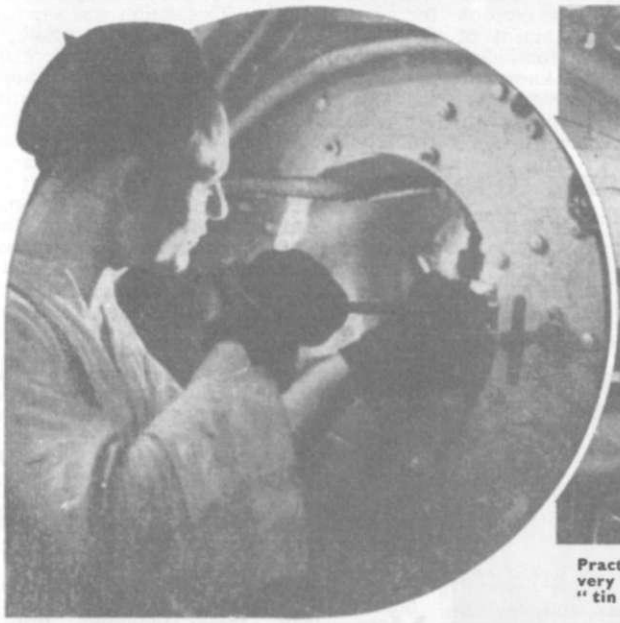
It seems that finish can be written to that U-boat, but no chances can be taken. Again the trawler takes up position for a third attack. Once more she runs in. Once more the depth charges go over. Once more comes the great shudder as they explode. Then the coxswain drops over the side a buoy carrying a red flag and a lamp to mark the spot.

"Sparks" has long since passed the running commentary of the attack over the air to the base, and back comes the wireless message ordering the trawler to stand by during the night and see that no sign of life comes from the submarine. With the daylight comes a destroyer to check evidence and make sure that it is safe to write off that U-boat. Then another message, this time from the C.-in-C. "Well done." Now the trawler can make for port again. The sea-terrier has finished off another rat.

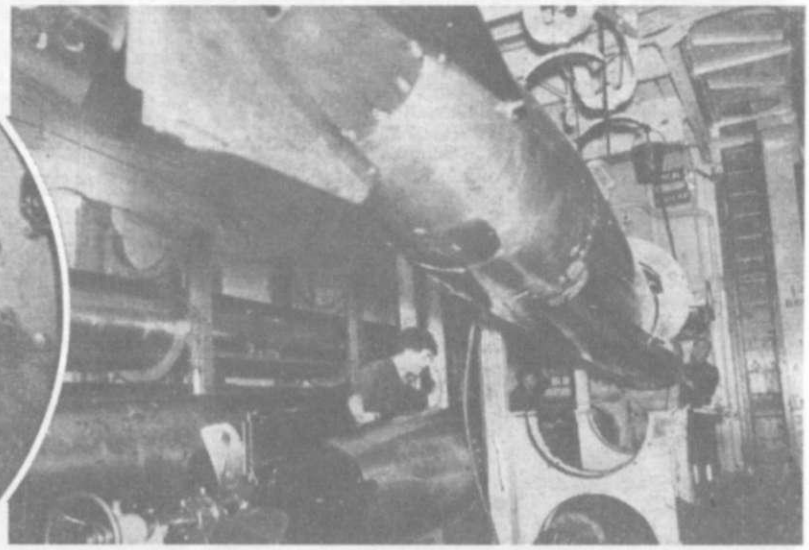


These members of a U-boat crew are being helped aboard a British ship. They look up hopefully at their rescuers as they are hauled to safety from their indiarubber raft. *Photo, Keystone*

Above Deck and Below in the Fighting Navy



The Stoker P.O. in the boiler-room of a modern oil-fired warship has his eyes constantly on dials and gauges and his hands on controls.



Practically all the ships of the Royal Navy from battleships to destroyers, except the very newest battleships, carry torpedo tubes. The torpedo-room in which the 21-in. "tin fish" are kept is seen in the photograph above. A torpedo is just being placed in the tube, while another is being lowered into position ready to follow it.

LIFE on the ocean wave : the photographs in this page give some idea of life in a battleship today when, except during their watch below, most of the men are engaged in handling complicated machinery both for fighting and propulsion. The stokers, for instance, are no longer the "black squad" who once shovelled coal into the furnaces, but experts in handling the elaborate gear required for oil fuelling. Torpedoes require expert mechanical knowledge for their handling, while gun control and navigation demand that the gunnery and navigation officers should have an intimate knowledge of the scientific instruments used.

The control of a battleship is a very complicated matter compared with what it was thirty or forty years ago—as the photograph above, taken on the compass platform of a battleship at sea, shows. The navigating officer, centre, is giving instructions ; on his left is the officer of the watch, while one of innumerable "gadgets" is the magnetic compass, right.

Jack's watch below in wartime is even more welcome than in peacetime, and in winter weather the lower deck is the best place for it. Reading and table games help pass the time away, and it is warm enough for such scanty clothing as the man in the hammock wears.

Photos, British Official : Crown Copyright ; and "Daily Mirror"

OUR SEARCHLIGHT ON THE WAR

Lord Halifax Goes to Washington

VISCOUNT HALIFAX, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, succeeds Lord Lothian as Ambassador to the U.S.A. Mr. Churchill's choice is approved on both sides of the Atlantic, for the new Ambassador's courage, high integrity of character, and complete grasp of the aims and direction of Britain's foreign policy, have long been recognized and well qualify him to be the successor of a man regarded at the time of his tragically sudden death as almost irreplaceable. The "New York Times," commenting on the appointment, remarked: "Lord Halifax may be counted upon to serve his country in a critical hour not as a diplomat but as a peculiarly sincere and eloquent exponent of the thesis that peace on earth is contingent on men's good will. . . . The most uncompromising fighter is the man of peace who is forced to take up the sword." Lord Halifax is succeeded at the Foreign Office by Mr. Anthony Eden, who is already well acquainted with this Ministry. In 1926 he became Parliamentary Private Secretary to Sir Austen Chamberlain, who was at that time Foreign Minister, and later served there while Lord Privy Seal and Minister without Portfolio. In 1935 Mr. Eden succeeded Sir Samuel Hoare as Foreign Secretary, but resigned in February 1938 owing to his disagreement with Mr. Chamberlain's Italian policy. The post of War Minister, relinquished by Mr. Eden, will be filled by Capt. David Margesson, who has been Government Chief Whip since 1931.

Viscount Halifax, left, is one of the few statesmen who have been both Viceroy of India and Foreign Secretary. Mr. Anthony Eden, centre, who succeeds him at the Foreign Office, was, when first he was Foreign Secretary in 1935, only 38 years of age. Captain David Margesson, right, the new Secretary of State for War, was a Whip—Conservative or National Government—since 1924. *Photo, Press Portrait Bureau and Planet News*

Defenceless Island Shelled by Raider

NAURU, a British South Pacific island well known for its rich phosphate deposits, was heavily shelled on December 27 by a German raider which approached the island disguised under a Japanese name and bearing Japanese colours. Just before opening fire she hoisted the Nazi flag. The raider appeared soon after daybreak and signalled in Morse: "Don't use wireless or I will shoot the mast down. I am going to shoot at stores and the phosphate jetties." The helpless inhabitants had perforce to obey the instruction and save their radio station. Great damage was done by shells to plant, stores, and fuel tanks. Nauru, which now has a population of 3,000, mostly natives, was annexed by Germany in 1888. At the outbreak of the Great War it was occupied and garrisoned by Australian soldiers, and since the Peace Conference has been jointly administered, under the terms of a League of Nations mandate, by the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. The erection of fortifications and the establishment of naval, or military bases is strictly forbidden, facts which are, of course, well known to the enemy. It has been officially stated that the production of phosphates will be impossible for some months to come.

Air Successes in Africa

ONE fighter squadron of the R.A.F., now serving in the Western Desert, has destroyed 51 Italian aircraft since war began, and has recorded in addition twelve unconfirmed victories. The Empire is well represented in this particular squadron, for in it are pilots from India, South Africa, Rhodesia, and British Columbia, as well as from Britain. An all-Australian fighter squadron is also piling up a remarkable total of successes in Libya. On December 28 it was announced that the immediate award of the Distinguished Flying Cross had been made to four Squadron Leaders serving in the Middle East Command.

Nazis Say: Enough Food For All

THERE are two schools of opinion about the need for sending food to German-occupied countries. Mr. Hoover and others in U.S.A. have been pleading for food ships from America to be allowed through the blockade, and this point of view receives support from accounts by neutral observers of food queues and shortage of necessities in Europe. Britain's contention that there is no reason for the American food ships receives corroboration from an unexpected quarter: a report issued by the Berlin Institute for Business Research. This claims that Germany is able to feed adequately every individual on the Continent. A list is attached to the report showing that German stocks and production equal 90 per cent. of requirements, South-Eastern Europe 110 per cent., and other countries as follows: Denmark, 108 per cent.; Italy, 95 per cent; France, 83 per cent.; Holland, 67 per cent.; and Belgium, 51 per cent.. Figures for Poland and Norway are omitted.

German Reprisals in Norway

EVEN less kindly than some of the other occupied countries has Norway taken to Nazi control, and the Quisling regime is being opposed, actively or passively, all over the country. The recent sit-down strike of buyers transacting business on the Oslo Stock Exchange was a clear indication that Norwegian financiers are of the same opinion as the general public. This action was stigmatized in Quisling's newspaper, "Fritt Folk," as a form of high treason. The German authorities are becoming more and more vindictive in their manner of dealing with opposition, supposed or active. Several teachers and 50 pupils of a high school at Oslo were recently arrested on the charge of tolerating or inciting the maltreatment of pupils whose fathers belong to the National Assembly or to the Hirden organization, the counterpart of the German S.S. troops. Others were attacked and their pockets searched for photographs of King Haakon. On December 16 the 18,000 inhabitants of the town of Aalesund were forbidden to stay out of doors after dark for four nights a week. This punishment was enforced because, in spite of warnings, crowds had assembled outside the German barracks, when two Norwegians were shot dead by troops who charged. More severe reprisals will be made on whole towns unless demonstrations against the supporters of Quisling cease. Norwegian prisons are now so full that special gaols have been opened for political prisoners.

Round-Up of Englishwomen in Paris

MORE than three thousand British women living in Paris have been recently arrested and interned by order of the German authorities. For the most part they are elderly women, some being over eighty, and a large proportion have been nannies or governesses in French households. In most districts each woman was visited by a French policeman who gave her two hours in which to pack her belongings and to report at the police station; but in one area the unhappy women were detained under arrest when they went to make their compulsory daily report, and were not allowed to return home for necessaries. Later they were removed by special trains to distant internment camps, one of which is at Val Dajol, near Plombieres, in the Vosges. This action has caused much indignation among the prominent French aristocratic and industrial families who employed and became attached to these Englishwomen, and the American Red Cross has been busy endeavouring at their request to secure the release of individuals. The question of arranging for the repatriation of German women interned in this country in exchange for British women detained by Germany is receiving Government attention.

Spain Tricked by the Axis

A SECRET document which was discovered, with other papers, in an Italian submarine disabled by the Royal Navy, proves once more that the good will so often professed by the Axis partners towards Spain has no basis in fact. The text of this remarkable order, which is signed by Admiral Falangola, officer in command of submarines, is as follows:

> Inform the units under your command that the ships flying the Spanish flag belonging to the Ybarra and Pinillos shipping companies leaving or coming from Casablanca and sailing towards Lisbon must be attacked without warning. The steamers of the Ybarra company have a black funnel with the letters A.V. interlaced in white. The house flag is blue and bears the same monogram in white. The Pinillos company has not any particular markings; it appears to own the ships Sil, Ario, Celta, of 2,500, 800, and 1,200 tons respectively.

The reason for sinking without warning the merchant ships of these two inoffensive Spanish lines is not given, but it has been surmised that it was in order to spread abroad the tale that they had been sunk by Britain, and in this way to rouse anti-English feeling in Spain.

I Saw Shells Pumped into Valona

The British battleships which shelled Valona by moonlight on the night of December 18, 1940 took the sleeping Italians completely by surprise, as is shown in this eye-witness story by an Associated Press correspondent who was aboard one of the attacking battleships. An account of the naval operation is given in page 6.

WHEN Valona, Mussolini's chief supply base in Albania, was shelled by British naval units I watched the bombardment through narrow slits in the after control tower of a British battleship. The ship's commander had posted bulletins before the attack saying: "Objective—to discomfort the Italians."

Mussolini's shore batteries remained silent during the bombardment, leaving no doubt that the enemy had been so taken by surprise that he was unable to fire his guns in the direction of the flashes, even though he could not immediately determine the warships' exact positions.

Scores of shells hurtled through the air from the warships, each carrying more than 2,000 lb. of destruction. For 12 minutes shells were pumped into Valona, the sound of the guns reverberating miles along the Albanian coast.

Shells exploded with tremendous force in the naval yards, amid ships, warehouses and military establishments. A reddish glow, which soon lit the peaks of the 2,000-ft. mountains surrounding Valona, showed that great fires had been started.

The warships then moved slowly southward, and the Italian batteries fired star shells, vainly trying to light up the attacking forces, but not a single enemy bomber attempted to attack us as we retired. As the light of fires crept over the mountains, a youthful midshipman in the top control tower sang "One Night of Love."

This was the first time that the Battle Fleet had ventured so far north in the Adriatic. It fought its way through heavy seas, strong winds and blinding rain for two days before turning into the Straits of Otranto.

There a break in the weather came, and at Valona the warships went close enough inshore to see the lone light of the harbour before firing their terrific broadsides.

Millicent Pennington, Section Officer in the A.F.S., whose story of how she gained the M.B.E. is told in this page.
Photo, "Daily Express"

'It Was Funny When We Ducked'

Among awards for heroism granted in December to members of the London A.F.S. and Women's A.F.S. was that of the medal of the civil division of the Order of the British Empire to Section Officer Millicent Pennington. Section Officer Pennington's own story of her exploit was published in the W A.F.S. magazine and is given below.

THE official announcement of awards to Millicent Pennington and Winifred Eustace, Women's A.F.S., states that "during several serious fires on oil depots, wharves, and factories, they attended with the canteen van for 12 hours each night, and carried out their work under heavy bombardment with outstanding coolness." In a vivid description of this incident, Section Officer Pennington said:

On the night we took the long trip to —— we went "in convoy," preceded by dispatch rider and control car and followed by the canteen van from H.Q.

We sat—"hovered" expresses it better—on the front seat and proceeded through a darkness which was sometimes brilliantly lit by gun flashes and searchlights, which was decidedly helpful when we had to wriggle our way round bomb craters.

Bombs were dropping around us all the time, and often we had the further light of fires.

It was more than an hour's drive, and when we got to our destination we had to be ready as soon as possible. The urns had been lit en route, so in fifteen minutes we were serving. We were so close to the fires we could feel the heat quite intensely.

The men were strange to see. They were hot and wet, and their faces were as black as niggers' from dirt, oil, and perspiration. Only their teeth and eyes gleamed.

When the Bombs Came Over

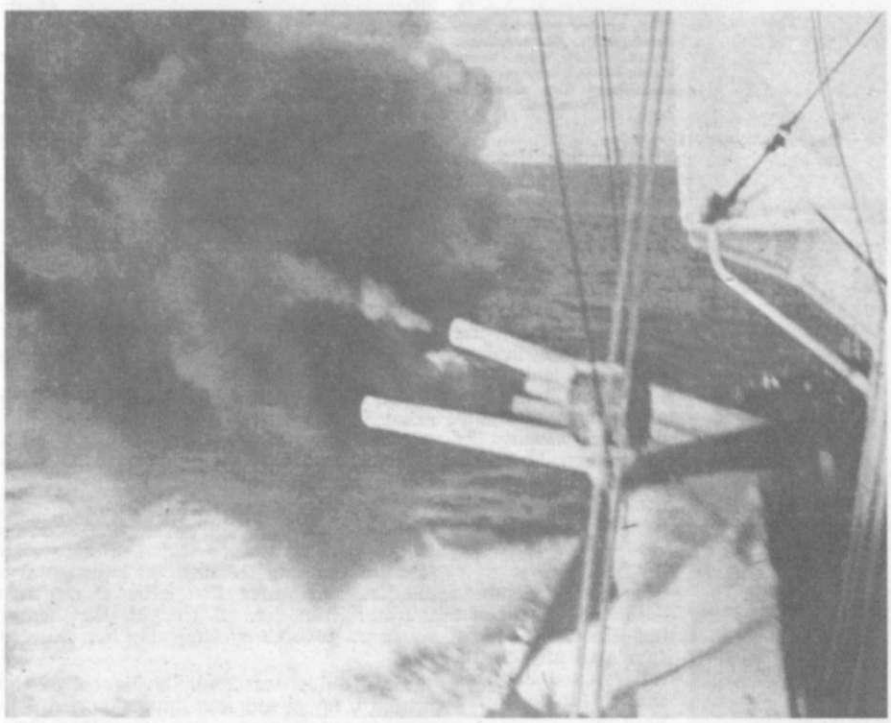
Still more extraordinary was the moment—many moments—when the bombs came over. The sub-officer controlling the queue every now and then would yell, "Duck!"

Then everyone bent down, and as I ducked, too, all I could see would be rows and rows of steel helmets . . . like a sort of armadillo.

The effect was really quite funny.

One man told me his one thought when ducking was how to steady his cup of tea—much more important to save it than to duck quickly!

We served hundreds of men, and as the hours went on we also gave them "iron rations," that is, stewed meat, Irish stew, etc. Altogether we were out more than thirteen hours.—"*Daily Express.*"



FIFTEEN-INCH GUNS of British battleships were among those that poured their rain of shells into Valona on December 18, 1940. Here a battleship of the Mediterranean Fleet is firing one of the salvos that took heart out of the Italians, and whose thunder put heart into the Greeks.
Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright

I WAS THERE!

We Heard Captain Reid's Last Farewell

As the British steamer "Western Prince" sank after being torpedoed in the Atlantic, her commander, Captain Reid, stood alone on the bridge waving farewell to the passengers and crew. The following eye-witness stories of this sea tragedy pay tribute to the captain's heroism and self-sacrifice.

AMONG the survivors from the torpedoed "Western Prince" was Mr. C. D. Howe, Canadian Minister of Munitions, who, describing the sinking of the ship, said:

We stayed up until after midnight to see Friday the 13th safely out, and I was in bed asleep when the ship was torpedoed at ten minutes to six on Saturday morning. We wakened to the sound of the explosion and the ringing of bells. Twenty minutes later we were in the lifeboats and we saw the ship sink. We went back over the wreckage after the "Western Prince" went down, but there was no sign of any survivor.

Among those who were lost was the captain's steward, a man named Franks. He had gone back to the sinking ship to get the crew's Spitfire fund money. I understand the crew had collected about £100 from their tips and wages. Franks obtained the keys and went back to salvage it. He went down with the ship with the money in his hand.

We heard Captain Reid give three hoots on the siren in token of farewell.

After the first torpedo hit the ship the submarine surfaced and we saw the Nazis taking pictures of the sinking by flashlight. When the ship disappeared our lifeboats cruised over the floating debris. Suddenly the submarine, partially submerged, passed within 50 feet of us.

We had been some time in the boat when the rescue ship, a British freighter, came along. It was a difficult job to pick us up in the heavy seas that were running, but the captain did a grand job.

It took us over four days to reach port. The captain of the freighter had accommodation for only 32 on his ship, but he undertook the task of feeding an extra 140 with great promptness.

The 10,926-ton liner "Western Prince," torpedoed on December 13, 1940, on her way to England (left). Above: Capt. John Reid, who went down with his ship, after sounding the siren in farewell.

It was due to the magnificent seamanship shown by Captain Reid in getting the lifeboats away in dangerous seas and to the skill shown by the captain of our rescue ship that the casualty list was so light. The crews of both ships behaved marvellously and the passengers were grand. There was not a single trace of panic.

Mr. Cunningham, of São Paulo, Brazil, said that Captain Reid stood gallantly on the bridge sounding his siren in farewell. He went on:

We could easily have found a place for him on the boat, but he thought there were enough in it and refused to come. After the ship went down we rowed over the spot, but all we saw was wreckage.

We encountered mountainous seas, and it was little short of miraculous how we survived. At the outset the seas were lifting the lifeboats as high as the promenade deck of the ship. Five lifeboats got away safely but the sixth overturned.

Describing how this lifeboat capsized after being swept against the side of the ship, one of the men aboard said:

The seas were too much for us, and we crashed against the hull. The motor-boat capsized. There were 25 of us in the boat, including four passengers. I was picked up after struggling in the water for some time, but some of the others were lost.

Babies 'as Good as Gold'

Three babies—three-months-old Alexandra Bankoff, eleven-months-old Frances Dent, and Roderick Henderson—were among the rescued. With a number of women passengers they were hoisted in baskets from the lifeboats to the rescue ship by a crane. A woman passenger said that "all the babies were as good as gold."

Telling the story of her rescue, Mrs. Dent said: Luckily I had thought of the possibility of being torpedoed, and only the night before I packed a small kitbag with warm clothes for baby.

I never dressed so quickly in my life, but baby was still in her pyjamas when I carried her to the boat station. As soon as we got clear of the ship I pulled on baby's warm clothes, and after that I never heard a murmur from her. I tried to keep her as warm as possible by snuggling her close to me.

The trouble was food, but we solved the problem by giving her tinned curried rice and tinned salmon. She seemed to thrive on it, and I don't think I shall worry about her diet after this!—"*Daily Telegraph*" *and* "*Daily Mail.*"

Stepping safely ashore at a British port is Mrs. Dent, whose dramatic description of the escape of herself and her baby from the torpedoed "Western Prince" is given in this page. *Photos, Associated Press*

Sidelights on France Under the Nazis

The Nazis in France have ranged A.A. guns along the sands on the Channel coast to form part of their defences against the R.A.F. The German caption of the photo, right, explains the fact that such light guns are used only to keep the gun crews in practice, though of late the R.A.F. has given them what might be thought quite sufficient opportunities to shoot in earnest!

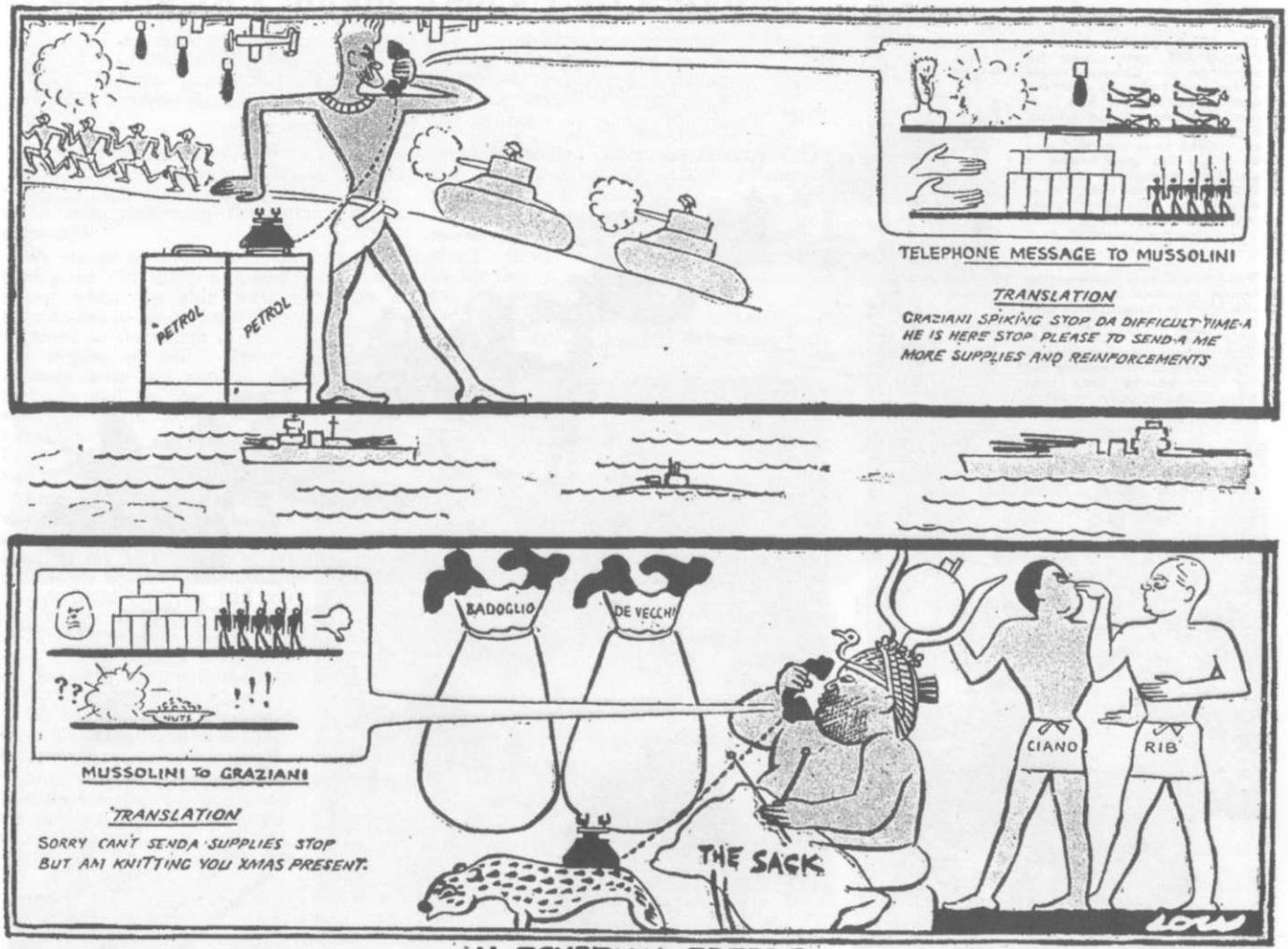
Vital roads and railways by which supplies might reach the Nazi invasion ports constitute highly legitimate objectives of the R.A.F. The German motor scouts, right centre, are looking out for any bombs that may have fallen in open country.

The commanding officer of a German submarine that has just returned from a raid on British shipping, salutes as his ship enters one of the Atlantic ports now used as U-boat bases.

OCCUPIED FRANCE has now its "Jeune Front," with its offices in Paris (left). Above, Marshal Pétain greeting children who have been expelled from Alsace by the Nazis.

Photos, Wide World, Keystone, E.N.A., and Associated Press

Cartoon Commentary on the War

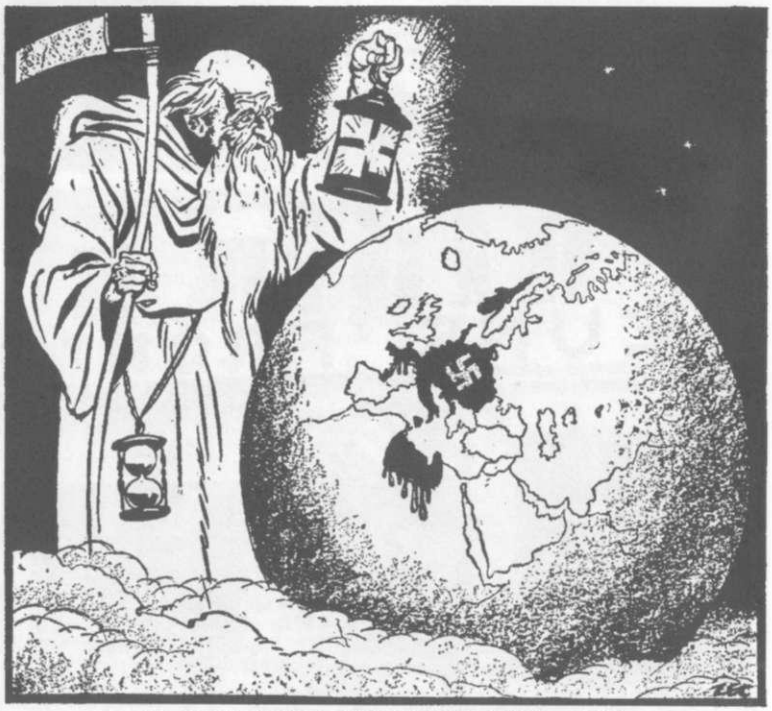


AN EGYPTIAN FREEZE

Cartoon by Low, courtesy of the "Evening Standard"

"MOTHOLINI" AROUND THE CANDLE

From the "Melbourne Argus"



"A DIRTY STAIN!—BUT IT WILL WEAR OFF!"

Cartoon by ZEC, courtesy of the "Daily Mirror"

Take Cover, Aussies! Raiders Approaching!

ANTI-DIVE BOMBER TACTICS now form part of the training of all the British and Dominion Armies. In these two photographs, Australian troops in training at Bonegilla camp are going through this part of their course. Top, troops are warned that enemy aircraft are approaching. Below, the men disperse on either side of the road and lie prone until danger has passed.

Photos, Associated Press

OUR DIARY OF THE WAR

SUNDAY, DEC. 22, 1940 *477th day*

On the Sea—Admiralty announced that H.M. submarine "Swordfish" was overdue and must be considered lost.

In the Air—At dawn Coastal Command aircraft attacked dockyard at Wilhelmshaven and enemy bases at Brest and Lorient.

R.A.F. bombed targets in Rhineland, including Mannheim and Ludwigshaven. Inland docks at Cologne were hit and oil stocks at Frankfort-on-Main were fired. Attacks also made on Channel ports and aerodromes.

War against Italy—British troops in Bardia area being steadily reinforced. Italian garrison putting up strong resistance. R.A.F. made successful night raid on Benina.

Home Front—No daylight activity except for few bombs dropped in west of Scotland. During night raids were again made on Merseyside and on Manchester, which had its first long and severe attack. Much damage done and many casualties. Enemy bombers were also reported from many other parts of the country.

Greek War—Severe battles reported from all sectors in Albania in spite of heavy snow. Chimara reported to be under heavy fire from Greek artillery. Eighteen Italian aeroplanes brought down.

Fierce air battle over Argyrokastro, when 9 R.A.F. machines attacked force exceeding 50, brought down 8 and damaged 3 others. Two British 'planes lost. R.A.F. raided oil wells at Kucove, Central Albania.

General—Lord Halifax appointed Ambassador to U.S.A., Mr. Anthony Eden to be Foreign Minister and Capt. David Margesson to be War Minister.

MONDAY, DEC. 23 *478th day*

In the Air—R.A.F. attacked Boulogne, Dunkirk, and Ostend, and industrial targets in the Rhineland, including Ludwigshaven.

War against Italy—British artillery constantly harassed Italians inside Bardia defences. Prisoners evacuated from Sidi Barrani battle stated to number 35,949, including 1,704 officers.

R.A.F. made heavy night attacks on Castel Benito and Tripoli.

Home Front—No daylight activity. During night enemy aircraft were active over widely separated districts, including London. Bombs dropped were mostly incendiaries.

Three enemy bombers shot down.

Greek War—Athens announced fall of Chimara and capture of 153rd battalion of Blackshirts. Battle continuing near Klisura.

General—Mr. Churchill broadcast to the Italian people.

TUESDAY, DEC. 24 *479th day*

On the Sea—C.-in-C. Mediterranean reported that on Dec. 21 naval aircraft attacked with torpedoes a convoy of three merchant ships and sank two.

War against Italy—Situation quiet around Bardia. No attempt made to relieve or support beleaguered garrison. R.A.F. bombed aerodromes at Tmimi and Gazala.

C.-in-C. Mediterranean announced that naval aircraft successfully attacked harbour of Tripoli on night of Dec. 20-21.

Home Front—No bombs dropped over Britain, but two trains in East England were machine-gunned from the air.

Greek War—Greeks continued successful advance. R.A.F. attacked Valona aerodrome.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 25 *480th day*

On the Sea—Enemy warship attacked British convoy in North Atlantic. One ship hit and slightly damaged. Escorting force pursued raider and engaged it at long range. H.M.S. "Berwick" sustained slight damage. During pursuit German steamer "Baden" was intercepted and set herself on fire.

War against Italy—British reinforcements continued to mass round Bardia. Enemy air attacks were ineffective.

R.A.F. made numerous reconnaissance and patrol flights, one being over Naples, where an Italian bomber was shot down.

Home Front—No raids made over Britain. Enemy aircraft shot down in Orkneys.

Greek War—Greeks launched vigorous attack north of Pogradets in direction of Lin. Greek pressure very strong in valley of R. Devoli. Italians organizing defences on heights protecting port of Valona.

Italian aircraft bombed town of Corfu.

THE DRAGON-SLAYER

"So much for that one, and now to face the next"

From the cartoon by E. H. Shepard, by permission of the Proprietors of "Punch"

THURSDAY, DEC. 26 *481st day*

On the Sea—Admiralty announced that H.M. destroyer "Acheron" had been sunk.

In the Air—Coastal Command aircraft bombed several aerodromes in Brittany and shipping at Le Treport. During night Bordeaux aerodrome was attacked.

War against Italy—G.H.Q. Cairo reported no change in the situation in Libya. During night R.A.F. successfully raided Tobruk.

On Sudan frontier British patrols carried out successful raid east of Kassala. Growing revolt reported in Southern Abyssinia.

Home Front—Enemy aircraft dropped bombs on Isle of Sheppey. No night raids.

Greek War—Athens reported successful local operations which enabled enemy positions to be occupied. Italian retreat continued north and east from Chimara.

R.A.F. raided Krionero. Shipping and military targets at Valona were bombed.

FRIDAY, DEC. 27 *482nd day*

On the Sea—Pacific island of Nauru (British) heavily shelled by enemy raider disguised under Japanese name and colours. Severe damage done to buildings and plant.

In the Air—R.A.F. raided enemy ports from Norway to Normandy. Shipping and harbour works in Haugesund area hit.

Coastal Command aircraft bombed submarine base at Lorient and aerodromes in Brittany. Merignac aerodrome, near Bordeaux, again attacked. Docks at Cherbourg and ship yards at St. Nazaire bombed.

War against Italy—G:H.Q. Cairo reported that situation remained unchanged.

Home Front—Enemy aircraft dropped bombs during morning on town in S.E. England. Night raids were resumed and many bombs fell in London during 4-hour onslaught, causing casualties and damage.

Dover shelled before dawn by long-range guns from Channel coast.

SATURDAY, DEC. 28 *483rd day*

In the Air—R.A.F. attacked oil targets at Rotterdam and Antwerp. Lorient was again raided.

Wave after wave of bombers plastered German invasion ports and long-range gun positions.

War against Italy—Cairo reposted that concentration of British forces round Bardia was proceeding. Mobile detachments were clearing country to westwards.

Patrols again active on frontier of Sudan and Kenya.

Home Front—Lone raider dropped bombs over Southampton in daylight. At night intensive raid made on town in S.W. England and hundreds of people rendered homeless.

Greek War—Greeks pushing slowly but steadily ahead. Italians raided Greek naval base of Preveza and claimed to have hit a ship.

SUNDAY, DEC. 29 *484th day*

On the Sea—Greek submarine "Papanikolis" reported to have torpedoed three Italian troopships in the Adriatic.

In the Air—During night two waves of R.A.F. heavy bombers raided Naples.

Despite very bad weather aerodromes and Channel invasion ports were attacked, as well as targets in Frankfort area, Germany.

War against Italy—Cairo reported that in Bardia area British artillery had again been active with some slight response from the garrison. Enemy abandoned fort of Sidi Aziz, south-west of Bardia.

Enemy landing-grounds at Tmimi, Derna and Gazala were bombed.

South-west of Kassala and east of Gallabat British patrols, supported by artillery, harassed the enemy.

Home Front—Slight enemy activity over Britain by daylight. At night waves of aircraft made determined attempt on London, showering incendiary bombs over both City and outskirts. Many buildings destroyed by fire, including the Guildhall, nine City churches, Trinity House, several halls of City Companies, a museum, two hospitals, several schools and innumerable commercial buildings and houses.

Greek War—Athens stated that enemy had been driven from fortified positions north and north-west of Chimara. Greeks won important positions on R. Drinos. R.A.F. raided Valona twice.

General—Mr. Roosevelt in a broadcast warned the Americas of danger from the Axis.